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Validity and Value of Religious Experience

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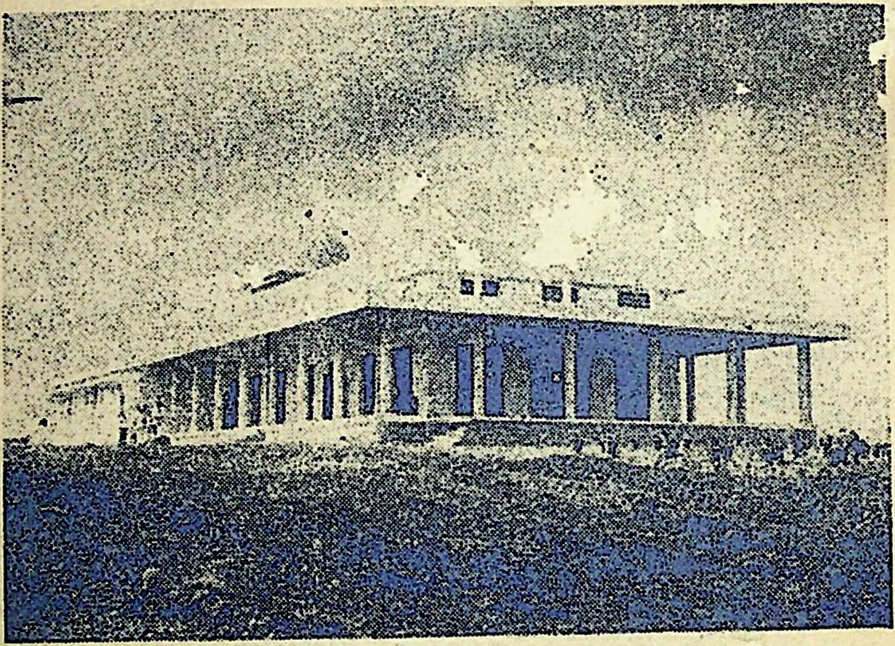

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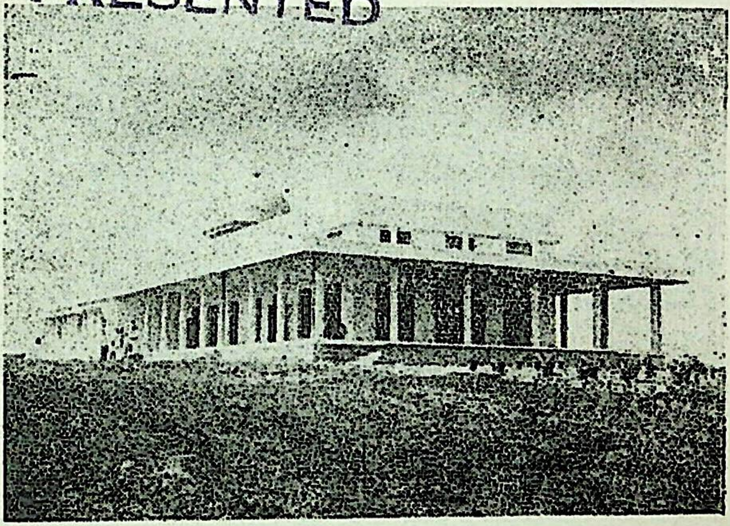

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Participants in the Seminar
Thanks giving by Shri. G. D. Saraff.

* * *

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Prefatory Note

Seminar on "Validity and Value of Religious Experience."

Under the auspices of 'Academy of Comparative Philosophy and Religion,' Belgaum, and as a part of its various activities a two-day Seminar was organised on 12th and 13th October, 1968, in which eminent scholars participated and read papers on different aspects of "Validity and Value of Religious Experience." The following scholars participated in the Seminar :

1) Dr. (Smt.) Lila Gole, Poona : "Nature and Varieties of Religious Experience."
2) Dr. T. G. Kalghatgi, Dharwar : "Mysticism"
3) Shri M. S. Deshpande, Athani : "Validity and Utility of Spiritual Experience."
4) Dr. G. N. Joshi, Poona : "Religion: Its relation to modern times."
5) Prof. K. D. Tangod, Belgaum : "Psychological aspect of religious experience."
6) Prof. B. R. Kulkarni, Delhi : "Psychological aspect of religious experience."
7) Dr. A. G. Javadekar, Baroda : "Valuational Determination of the validity of religious experience."

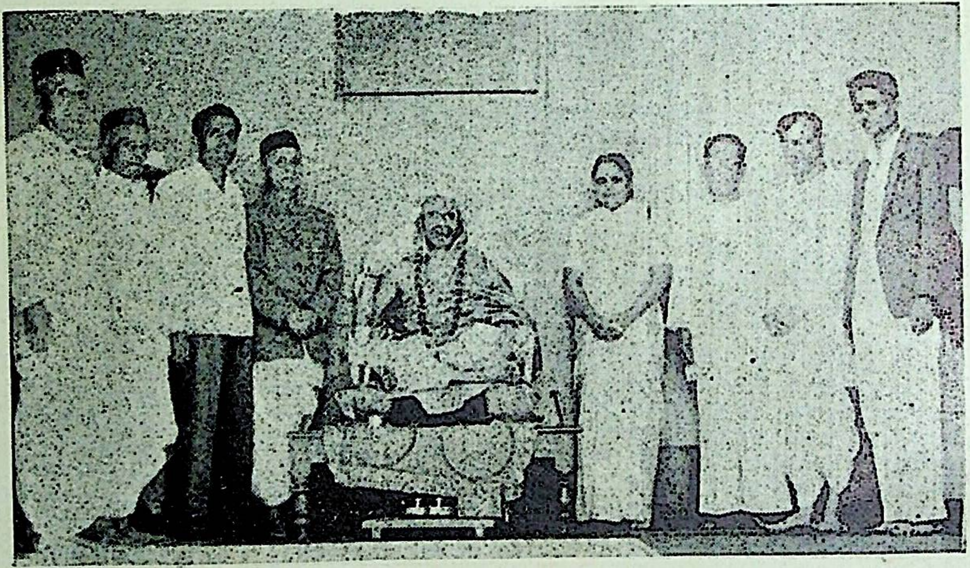
The Seminar was inaugurated on 12th October 1968, at 11 A. M. by His Holiness Shri Shankaracharya of Sankeshwar Math. A large and distinguished audience had gathered for the function. Sri V. G. Jamkhandi, a Trustee of the Academy, made a brief speech welcoming H. H. Shri Shankaracharya, the participants and the audience. Prof. B. R. Kulkarni introduced the participants in the Seminar to the audience. His Holiness, in his inaugural address, stressed the dire necessity of such seminars for a proper understanding of religion and its significance in our life. While wishing all success to the seminar he urged that search after truth should be the aim of such seminars and not mere argumentative skill, which might lead to bickering and exhibition of vanity.

Immediately after the inaugural function, the first session of the Seminar started at 12 noon with Shri V. G. Jamkhandi in the chair. Dr. Smt. Lila Gole read the paper on "Nature and Varieties of Religious Experience." A discussion followed in which many persons participated.

In the second session on the same day, Prof. T. G. Kalghatgi's paper on "Mysticism" was read and discussed. This was followed by Shri M. S. Deshpande's paper on "Validity and Utility of Spiritual Experience."

A lively discussion followed in which it was urged by some that no spiritual teacher or Guru was necessary as the father himself was a real

SEMINAR : 1968 Participants with Chief Guest
H. H. Shri Shankaracharya : Sankeshwar Matha



1) Shri. J. V. Parulekar, B. A.
2) Shri. M. S. Deshpande, M. A.
3) Prof. B. R. Kulkarni
4) Shri. V. G. Jamkhandi.
5) H. H. Shri. Shankaracharya.
6) Dr. (Smt.) Leela Gole
7) Dr. T. G Kalghatgi.
8) Dr. A. G. Javadekar.
9) Prof. K. D. Tangod.

teacher and he would initiate son into religious life by giving the Gayatri Mantra. Guru-hood, it was argued, had done more harm than good. But it was pointed out by some others that there might have been fathers in ancient times who were enlightened enough to initiate their children into spiritual life. But now a days what has happened is that realisation or enlightenment has vanished and father-hood alone has remained. The discussion also touched such topics as Buddha's spiritual pursuit and enlightenment.

Dr. G. N. Joshi could not be present, for the Seminar and so his paper was read by Prof. K. D. Tangod.

In the discussion that followed, a question was raised as to whether the sex instict played any part in religious life. It was pointed out that sex had nothing to do with true mysticism and that sex and genuine spiritual enlightenment were poles apart.

On 13th October, 1968 the seminar continued its proceedings at 8 A. M. when Prof. K. D. Tangod read a paper on " Psychological Aspect of Religions Experience." Then followed a paper by Prof. B. R. Kulkarni on the same topic.

The first session ended at 11-30 A. M.

After lunch, Dr. A. G. Javadekar read a paper on ' Valuational Determination of the Validity of Religious Experience." In the discussion interesting points were raised. The aim of religion, it was pointed out, was self-realisation or God-realisation. Complete self-surrender is the surest way to such realisation.

Dr. A. G. Javadekar thanked Shri. J. V. Parulekar, the Secretary and other organisers for the excellent arrangements made for the invited guests and for conducting the Seminar.

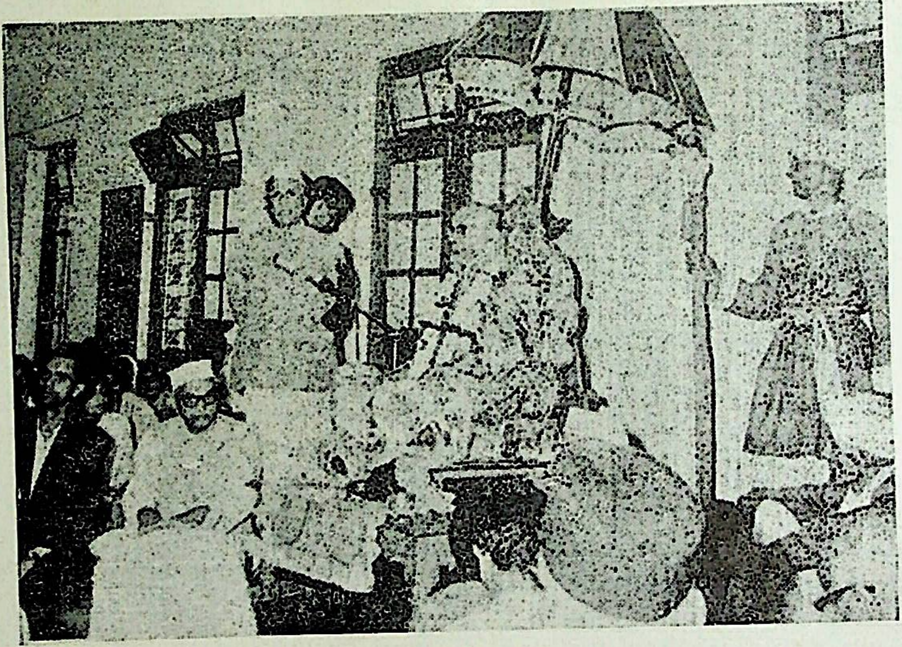
In the concluding session, the President, Shri V. G. Jamkhandi, took a review of the various points raised in the discussion and his presidential speech was marked by profundity of thought and lucidity and comprehensiveness of exposition.

The papers read in the Seminar and the substance of the concluding remarks by the President are being published for the benefit of the public.

Prof. B. R. Kulkarni proposed a vote of thanks to the President for conducting the proceedings of the meeting so nicely and for his illuminating concluding remarks.

After the Arati and prasad the Seminar came to an end.

B. R. Kulkarni
M. A. LLB.
Director : Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, New Delhi.



Thanks giving by Shri G D. Saraff [Trustee] v

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Nature and Varieties of Religious Experience.

Professor Dr. Leela D. Gole.
M. A., Ph. D., Poona

Before I enter into the problem of nature and varieties of religious experience I would like to clarify a few points which are assumed in this paper.

Religious experience is essentially one with the mystical experience and as such the present analysis is the analysis of that core of religious experience which reveals to the aspirant or mystic the true nature of Reality.

The paper does not aim at proving the truth and validity of the religious experience; but it assumes its truth & validity and tries to elucidate its major characteristics and principal types.

This analysis is based on the authentic reports of the mystics all over the world, which bear striking similarity and share common ideas. These sayings of different mystics seem to suppose the following principles :-

(i) The phenomenal world of matter and individual consciousness are only a partial reality and both are the manifestations of a Divine Ground in which all partial realities have their being.

(ii) It is the nature of man that not only can he know Reality by inference but also he can realize it by the direct intuition in which the knower is almost united with the Known; &

(iii) It is the chief end of man's earthly existence to discover the Divine Ground which essentially is his true self.

A man who does not believe in these three fundamental aspects of the perennial philosophy will only neglect the Religion of the spirit and simply condemn the religious experience as a piece of hallucination or pathological phenomenon.

A serious and deeper thought, however, will show that Religion & Religious Experience are too precious achievements of human culture to be thrown out so casually.

The basic notion always found in Religion, then, is that of the return of the spirit to its immortal and infinite Ground which is God or Brahman. Now, this may take more than one form. In the most of the Eastern mysticism, it takes a form of Absorbtion i. e. according to this type, the real self or spirit is thought of as absorbed into the Ultimate Reality or God. In another type, which is more characteristic of the West, the soul or spirit created by God is said to be deified; i. e. it becomes as it were God, but without losing its identity by a process of union and transformation whereby it becomes a new creature.

This difference in emphasis disappears when one realizes, that both in the East & West, the religious seekers are divided into four ascending types as pointed out by Ruysbroeck, in his 'Sparkling Stone'. They are according to him as follows :- i) Hirelings, ii) Faithful Servants, iii) The secret friends & iv) The hidden sons of God.

Hirelings are those who will not serve God **save for their own** profit and because of their own reward. These dwell in bondage and in their own selfhood; for they seek their own selfish interests in all they do.

The faithful servants are those who serve God in the outward & active life. They sublime their selfish interests to some extent but they have not yet been sufficiently inward. Consequently, they are divided in heart, unstable in mind & easily swayed by joy and grief of temporal things.

The secret friends are those who have conquered their self and entered on the inward life. They have not, yet, become fully inward much. In their loving adherence they feel united with God, yet, in their union they always feel a difference & otherness between God and themselves.

The hidden son of God is the most rare religious type. He loses his own life, in God. This stage is reached when there has been a complete death of the selfhood. In this state of illumination, the hidden sons of God lose and at the same time, find themselves.

These ascending states show that religious experience culminates in the total merging into the Divine. The most common feature of the mystical experience is the presence of a consciousness of Oneness or Unity. All life and existence is in One and One is in all. God is felt to be in every thing and everything to exist in God. At this highly developed stage of mystical consciousness, all feelings of duality and multiplicity are obliterated, including the duality between men and deity. Though it may be expressed differently, this is equally true of Hindu, Sufi and Chinese mystics and also of Plotinus and of the great mystics and contemplatives of Christianity. Culmination of Religious experience lies, thus, in the Union with Reality or God. In addition to this unitive character of this experience there are certain common characteristics which are marked in varied descriptions of religious experience enjoyed by different mystics at different levels, all over the world.

The first and foremost character of the religious experience is the quality of ineffability. i. e. It defies expression in terms which are fully intelligible to one who has not known some analogous experience. It thus resembles more a state of feeling than a state of intellect; for instance, neither the feeling of love, nor the pleasure of music are amenable to adequate communicable description.

Though the religious experience is more akin to states of feelings, it has element of knowledge. The religious states have a noetic quality. They result in insight which carries with it a tremendous sense of authority. They create in the mind of an experiencer a sense of certainty, that he does know the truth.

Thirdly, the religious experience rarely lasts for a long duration of time. It possesses the quality of transiency. The state lasts for a short time and there is a speedy return to the normal state. With the growing awareness of the mystic life, the experience may occur more and more frequently. As St. John of the Cross suggests these experiences increase in their frequency in the highest mystical states and they are seen to be controllable as well.

Of course, this control does not mean however, that they can be deliberately sought and found; because the religious experiences have a further characteristic of passivity. It comes on its own; there is no rule which invokes it causally.

A sense of timelessness is a further characteristic of the mystical experience. Time is the most puzzling category. Is it something which exists by its own or is it only a form of sensibility ? Our every day life reveals a constant flux of events in which we experience a time--series of past, present and future. A moment back the present moment was in future and a moment after that will be in the past. There is another series of 'Earlier than', 'later than' which gives the constant relationship between events. For example the hour I got up in the morning will always remain earlier than the time I shall go to bed tonight. Our normal sense experience falls into these two series of time. There are however, some other experiences in which both these series are absent. Such experiences are recorded by the mystics and they feel themselves to be in a dimension where there is no time, where there is ' eternal now '.

There is another characteristic of the mystical experience which is a sort of a joint-effect of the sense of oneness and sense of timelessness viz. the conviction that the phenomenal ego is not the real I. In the Non--dualistic philosophy of the Hindus, the individual self which is bound by bodily organizations and mental happenings which are subject to change and decay is not the true self; it is only phenomenal self. The true self is called as Atman, which is immortal, constant and unchanging. It also finds expression in a somewhat different form in Christian mysticism, under several phrases such as, the spark, the centre, or the apex of the soul, ground of the spirit etc.

Again as Miss Underhill rightly points out, ' True mysticism is always active and practical, never passive and theoretical'. It is the life process, a something which the whole self does. Secondly, the aim of mysticism is spiritual and transcendental. It brushes aside the universe even in its beautiful manifestations. A true mystic does not neglect his duty to the many but his heart is upon the changeless One. This One is for the mystic, not merely the Reality but the living, personal object of love. The living union with this One is the definite state which is achieved by going through a long and arduous process, the mystical way.

Attainment of Union with God is a slow and arduous process. It requires a disciplined and clean life which is based on the vigorous religious practice. The unfailing and regular effort to cultivate the religious discipline leads the devotee towards newer and newer vistas of religious life. On his mystic way he is encouraged by certain marks and signs, which come in the form of mystical experiences. There is ample variety among these religious experiences; for the sake of convenience we may here refer only to some major varieties of them.

The simplest and as a rule the first way in which the mystic becomes aware of the Divine contact is through 'Voices' and 'auditions'. True auditions are usually heard when the mind is in a state of deep absorption without conscious thought. Sometimes they break in upon the normal activities of the person with a startling abruption. However, they are not heard by the bodily ear and yet they are much more clearly understood than if they were heard by the ear. Human locution is not so clear and intelligible while

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the divine locution is so clear and vivid that not a single syllable of its uttarance is lost. St. Teresa's whole mystic life was governed by such voices; and she was guided throughout her life by them.

The voices however are divided in three varieties :-

[i] The immediate or inarticulate voices which the mystic knows so well but finds it difficult to define.

[ii] The distinct interior voices, perfectly articulate, but recognized as speaking only within the mind. The above recorded genuine voices of St. Teresa are of this sort.

[iii] Voices through hallucination which we all experience in dream or reveries, such voices are exterior, coming from outside.

Of these three kinds the first is the best form because it is a substantial, silent and inarticulate word. It is heard ceaselessly in the centre of the soul and it is never dumb and sterile. It is, in fact, vivifying and energizing word. Such words bring with them an unquestionable authority, an infusion of new knowledge or new life. Other two varieties should be always received with reservation. Especially the voices of the third type which come as exterior words, are regarded with suspicion and dislike.

Sometimes audition assumes a musical character. It probably corresponds to the temperamental bias of the individual and the music-loving souls hear the divine harmony with a marvellous sweetness. The lives of St. Francis of Assisi and St. Catherine of Sienna in the West and those of St. Meerabai and Surdas in India illustrate these musical auditions.

It is also found that some times the mystical revelations take the form of a dialogue. They are intimate colloquies between the Soul and Reality. St. Teresa, Angela of foling and many other mystics had such experiences. These utterances have many literary qualities such as rhythmic, poetic character and literary elegance that assures the listener of its genuine and authentic nature.

Just as mystic audition is the most common phenomenon in the mystic way, so also there is another equally common phenomenon and that is, there are some prophetic ' Visions '. As Miss Underhill rightly suggests, it would be called the effort of the man's deeper self to ' show ' truth, as audition implies an effort to ' speak ' truth.

The term ' Vision ' is used in the widest possible sense to include [i] formless intuition, [ii] crude optical hallucinations, [iii] voluntary visualizations common to the artistic mind and also, [iv] personal and secret Vision of Reality which the ardent devotee has. We should note at the outset that 'Vision' is recognized by the great thinkers as at best a very imperfect, oblique and untrustworthy method of apprehension. It is ungovernable, capricious and liable to deception.

We can trace in visi ons, three main groups which are illustrated over and over again. [1] Intellectual visions [2] Imaginary visions and [3] Corporeal visions. These three groups are parallel to the three groups in mystical audition.

As to coporeal vision, it has very few peculiarities of interest to the student of pure mysticism. Like the 'Exterior Word' it is more or less uncontrolled externalization of inward memories, thoughts or intuitions. They are the result of some deep rooted pious picture in the mind of an aspirant and some times they may be reproduced as sensorial hallucinations.

Intellectual vision is formless vision. It is so elusive and spiriual that it can hardly be distinguished from the contemplative state from which it arises It is intimate but indescribable; definite but indefinable. "It comes into the soul when the soul neither called nor prayed for It". The intellectual vision is closely connected with the consciousness of the presence of God. As St. Teresa says ' One feels at one's side Our Lord Jesus Christ, without, seeing with the bodily eyes'. Saints in Maharashtra often refer to such experiences.

Tukaram says " I feel constant presence of God in the form of Holy Company wherever I go and in whatever I do ". जेंथे जातो तेथें तूं माझा सांगाती.

These visions last longer than the imaginery visions. The devotee feels that God is present in all his actions; he feels that God is rather close to him and that He pours continual love and bliss on him. This sense of presence is so concrete and vivid that it is said to carry more conviction than bodily sight.

In the imaginary vision is the spontaneous and automatic activity of a power which all imaginative people possess. These visions are mental pictures at which the self looks passively and they are not sensorial hallucinations. They come in two forms:- (i) Symbolic and (ii) Personal. In the symbolic passive vision the self is shown the truth under an image. In this vision, the mystic sees a picture which has an allegorical significance. " An aspirant is sinking e. g. in floods and is suddenly saved by the Divine Hand ". In the second form of the imaginary

Vision, the mystic sees God in person. It is not symbolic in kind. It is direct apprehension of the concrete form of Deity as conceived by the mystic. The simple example of this vision is found in the vision of Christ experienced by many Christians at the Holy Mass or vision of Vithoba experienced by most of the Maharashtra Saints.

One more class of visual automatisms is named as 'Active Imaginery Visions' by Underhill. In this vision, the self seems to act, almost like a dramatic character. He sees for instance, a journey through Hell or ascent in Heaven or Marriage with the Divine. In all such dramatic experiences, the mystic himself plays an important roll i. e. He is active participant and not a passive on-looker.

In addition to these two basic varieties, there are many other phenomena such as automatic writings, Telepathy, Occult powers and other similar spiritual occurances which are described as religious experiences. But time at our disposal is too short either to distingish between the real and so called religious experience or to discuss them in details. The only remark that I would like to make in this connetion before I close this paper is this, that the religious experiences of the various kind should not be accepted without their careful analysis & merciless scrutiny. Again, they should not be mistakenly confused with the occult powers. Very often the occult powers are fanciful creations of the men of religion who belong to the group of the first kind viz. Hirlings described earlier. Again, these powers are usually condemned as the obstructions and impediments in the mystic's progress and very often than not, they lead the individual to deterioration and degeneration. Moreover, it should be remembered that Religious progress is not an easy job, it requires constant vigilence & merciless analysis of one's own experience & further demands continuous, rigorous and devout religious practice which gradually leads the aspirant to the invaluable Treasure of Divinity.

MYSTICISM

(A Synoptic View)

Dr. T. G. Kalghatgi,
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I. We are living in an age of science and technology. With the incredible rapidity of scientific progress, we have lost touch with the spiritual values of life. A new kind of materialism has crept in wherein we pay exclusive attention to the material things and the pleasures of life. We are giving what is God's to Caesar and what is Caesar's to Caesar. A new orientation of values would, therefore, be necessary and we should rebuild the structure of society to our heart's content. Study of mysticism and the mystic experiences will be helpful for us. It will enoble our lives and sweeten the purity of human destiny.

In modern philosophy and in science there have been tendencies to discredit religion and mystical experience as an illusion and a mental aberration. Some philosophers of Analysis may say that the assertion, " God exists ", is nonsense; strictly speaking it cannot be either true or false.

And 'direct awareness of God' would be as much nonsense as the assertion 'God exists'. Medical materialism denies the truth of religion and religious experience. It states that religious and mystical experiences are nothing but mental aberrations due to the metabolic changes. Saint Paul's vision on the road to Damascus is due to the discharging lesion of the occipital cortex, he being an epileptic; Saint Teresa was a hysteric and Saint Francis of Assisi a hereditory degenerate. Carlyle's organ-tones of misery can be accounted for by Gastro-duodenal catarrh. All such mental over-tensions are mere affairs of diathesis (auto-intoxication most probably), due to the perverted actions or various glands which physiology will yet discover.[1]

But it is difficult to dispense with religion and religious experiences as an illusion and a mental aberration on the grounds of mere emperical verifications. It is a fact of life that in every age there have been some men and women who apprehended reality and chose to present it to the people. Such first hand exponents of perennial philosophy, those who knew them have been generally given the name of 'saint' or 'prophet' or sage or 'enlightened one'.[2] In India we have two types of scriptures : (i) Śruti and (ii) the Smṛti. Śruti is the product of immediate insight into reality of the sages who experienced reality.

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[1] William James :-*The varieties of Religious experience* (Mentor 1958. pp. 29.)

II. Mysticism has been used to mean the first hand experience and direct contact with God. It is a complex experience. It is a universal yearning of the human spirit for personal communion with God.[3] It is the science of the union with the Absolute and nothing else.[4] Mysticism is the attitude of mind in which all other relations are swallowed up in the relation of soul to God.[5] It detaches the heart from all that is not God and gives to it for the sole occupation of the divine being.[6] All these conceptions of mysticism imply the existence of God and the communion of the soul with God.

But mysticism need not be defined only with reference to the communion with God. Otto and Stace, for instance, have shown that it is not necessary to postulate the existence of God for a theory of mysticism. "Mysticism can also exist where there is no conception of God at all or where for the final experience itself His existence is a matter of indifference."[7] Stace shows that an atheistic form of mysticism may exist, because the conception of a God need not be the central point of experience.[8] In this sense the Buddha may be considered a mystic. The Buddha denied the existence of any Supreme Being, although he had the direct experience of Reality. He got the Enlightenment. The Jaina Tirthankaras, as Arhats, had the vision of truth [Kevala Darśana and Jnāna]. Their experiences are not to be interpreted as communion with any higher Deity or God. If, therefore, mysticism is to be understood as an immediate non - discursive intuitive relation of the soul to God, there would be no mysticism in atheistic religions, like Buddhism and Jainism. But if mysticism is to cover the whole range of supra-rational experiences presenting the truth in all its aspects as one concrete experience, then we can find mystical experiences in Jainism.

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[2] Huxley (Aldous): *The Perennial Philosophy* (Fantona. Books) 1953. pp. 11.

[3] Arbery (A. I.) *Sufism* (Allen Unwin) pp.11.

[4] Underhill (Evelyn) : *Mysticism* (Mathuen 1945) pp. 70

[5] *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics.* Vol IV.

[6] William James : *Varieties of Relijious Experience* (Longmans Green 1919) pp. 402

The keynote of mysticism are growth autonomy self-realisation, self-actualisation and

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7. Otto (Rudolf): *Mysticism East and West* (Meridian Book 1957) pp. 141.

8. Stace (W. T.) : *Teaching of the Mystic* (The New Am Library 1960) pp. 24.

self-transcendence.[9] Man cannot complete himself without relating the values of the individualised ego to the wholeness of being and the universe. This is possible only when all the ego-centric desires and goals are transcended into the ultimate values and meaning of life. The mystic dwells in a different world of his own. The transcendental consciousness dominates the normal consciousness. Time and place, nationality and creed have no relevence for a mystic.

For the Jaina, Mokṣa is the highest ideal. It is the highest form of self-realization and the self to be realized is the transcendental self, for the Jainas sought the divine in man and established the scential divinity of man. The final stage of self-realization is the stage of absolute perfection. In this state all empirical adjuncts are removed. It is the state of Parabrahma and Niranjana. Zimmer shows that in this state the individuality marks, the formal personal features are distilled away like drops of rain that descend from the clear sky, taste-less and emasculate[10]

The Jaina view of omniscience may be compared to the Nyāya view of divine knowledge[11] and the Yoga theory of divine perception.[21] Divine knowledge is all-embracing and eternal. It has no break. It is a single all embracing experience. It is perceptual in character, as it is direct and not derived through the instrumentality of any other cognition. The divine perception grasps the past, the present and the future in one eternal 'now'. The **kaivalya** state of the individual soul may be compared to the divine omniscience. And the soul attains the consummation of omniscience by the removal of obscuring karmas, by meditation, the three-fold path and self-control. That is the finality of experience.

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[9] Mukerjee (Radhakamal) : *The Theory and Art of Mysticism.* Asia Publishing House 1961] pp. 14.

[10] Zimmer [H] : *Philosophies of India* (Kegan Paul 1951] pp. 260.

We can speak of the Mysticism of Jainism, as we can speak of the mysticism of the devotional saints. The question whether mysticism is possible in Jainism is not relevent "for the simple reason that some of the earliest author-saints like Kundakunda and Pūjyapāda have described transcendental experiences and mystical visions. It would be more reasonable to collect data from earlier Jaina works and see what elements of Jainism have contributed to mysticism, and in what way it is akin to or differs from such a

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11. *Nyāya Manjari* :200
12. *Yoga Sūtra* : 25

patent mysticism as that of monistic Vedānta. To take a practical view, the Jaina Tirthankars Ṛsabhadeva, Neminatha, Mahāvīra, etc. have been some of the greatest mystics of the world, and rightly indeed Professor Ranade designates Ṛsabhadeva, the first Tirthankara of the Jainas, as 'yet a mystic of different kind, whose utter carelessness of his body is the supreme mark of his God-realization'[13] and gives details of his mystical life. It would be interesting to note that the details about Ṛsabhadeva given in the Bhāgavata practically and fundamentally agree with those recorded by Jaina tradition.[14] Jaina mysticism turns round two concepts : Âtman and Paramātman. Ātman and Paramātman are essentially the same. And Jaina mysticism contains the essentials of mysticism in the fact that there is the exalted experience of perfect personality of Ātman and the Paramātman. It has metaphysical structure containing a spirit capable of enjoying itself as intelligence and bliss. "To evaluate mystical visions rationally is not to value them at all. These visions carry a guarantee of truth undoubtedly with him who has experienced them; and their universality proves that they are facts of experience. The glimpses of the vision, as recorded by Yogindu, are of the nature of light or of white brilliance. Elsewhere too we find similar experiences. It maybe noted that the excessive rigidity of the code of morality prescribed for a Jaina saint gives no scope for Jaina mysticism to stoop to low levels of degraded Tantricism.[15] It is for this very reason that we do not find the sexual imagery, so patent in Western mysticism, emphasized in Jainism, though similies like muktikāntā are used by authors like Padmaprabha. Sex-impulse is considered by Jaina moralists as the most dangerous impediment on the path of spiritual realization, so sexual consciousness has no place whatsoever in Jaina mysticism. The routine of life prescribed for a Jaina monk does not allow him to profess and practice miracles and magical feats for the benefit of house holders–with whom he is asked to keep very little company. 'The way to salvation has been three-fold: 1) the way of knowledge (samyagjñāna), the way of intuition and devotion (samygadarśana) and the way of action (samyagcāritra). It would not be proper to say that Jainism is predominently intellectualistic (jñāna prādhānya). The very fact that the Jainas have given promi–

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[13] R. D. Ranade :*Mysticism in Maharashtra*, p. 9

[14] *Paramātma Prakāsa and Yogasāra* Ed. A. N. Upadhye [Manilal Jhaveri 1967] pp. 39.

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[15] R. D. Ranade : *Mysticism in Maharashtra* as quoted by A. N. Upadhye.

nence to right intuition and faith (samyagdarśana) as one of the three ways to salvation shows that they have given proper orientation to the psychological function of intuitive experience.[16]

III So far we have referred to the Jaina mystics. In the theistic sense, mysticism emphasises the direct awareness of God. It is God-realization. We may here mention the psychological characteristics of Mysticism. William James mentions four marks of mystical experience. They are : i] Ineffability. This experience defies expression. No adequate report of its contents can be given in words. It is to be directly experienced and it cannot be imparted or transferred to others. One must have musical ears to know the value of a symphony, one must have been in love with one's self to understand a lover's state of mind; and so the mystic finds that most of us accord to his experiences an equally uncompetent treatment. (ii) Noetic quality. Mystical states are states of feeling and of knowledge. They are states of insight into depths of truth unplumbed by the discursive intellect. They are illuminations, revelations full of importance. They carry a curious sense of authority after time, although inarticulate. (iii) Transiency. Mystical states cannot be sustained for long. Except in rare instances half

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16) Ibid M. 41

an hour or almost an hour or two, seems to be the limit beyond which they fade into the light of common day. Often when faded, their quality can but imperfectly be reproduced in memory, but when they recur they are recognised and from one recurrence to another it is susceptible to continous development in what is felt as inner richness. (iv) Passivity. Although mystical states are facilitated by preliminary voluntary operations, once the consciousness has set in the mystic feels as if his own will were in abeyance and sometimes as if he were grasped and held by a superior power.[17]

It has been said that in the mystical experience there are four stages or degrees :—

[i] Incomplete union or the prayer of the quiet. In this the soul is still subject to distractions of imagination.

[ii] In the semipestatic union there are no distractions, but it is still in the possession of the bodily senses and able to control bodily movements.

[iii] In ecstasy the communications of the senses are entirely, or almost entirely interrupted, and voluntary movements are impossible. The mind is in a state of trance.

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17. William James : *The Varieties of Religious Experience* pp. 292–93.

(iv) The last state is the transforming union or the spiritual marriage. It, on the other hand, completes the three stages not by strengthening but by modifying them. The first three stages have a certain unity and continuity, they differ primarily in strength or intensity so that the first may be compared to a spark, the second to a flame, and the third to a conflagration. In the mystic union, the mystic does not merely think of God's presence with love; he feels or experiences union with God. The spiritual sensation, which is distinct from bodily sensation, is the essential characteristic of the mystic union[18]

[IV] In this age of Analysis, doubtful scepticism and fashionable agnosticism have been the prevailing tendencies, especially in respect of spiritual values, and religious experience. We are faltering in our attitude towards accepting what is spiritual. In his book My Philosophical Devleopmnt, Bertrand Russell said that after thinking out the problem during adolescence in solitude and with little help from books he came to disbelieve first in free-will, then in immortality and finally in God. But we need not measure everything by the instrument of reason. Reason is useful in science and rational philosophy. Yet it has its limitations.

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[18] Paton (H. J.) : *The Modern Predicament* [Allen Unwin 1955] pp. 149.

To extend the use of reason and logic to the field of trans-empirical experience is like using the knife for cutting bread for abdominal operations by a surgeon. Some philosophers, like the frog in the well, are blind to the world beyond. But it would seem a mere impertinence to pass judgement on mystical experience on the basis of external observation. Only those who have had the experience are entitled to judge, and they will need no help from a detached philosophy. For them, the experience itself is the guarantee of truth, and their conviction of its validity is absolute.[19]

The function of philosophy is not merely the academic pursuit of reality. It is a way of life. Philosophy has had the dual purpose of revealing truth and increasing virtue. Philosophers have sought to provide a principle to live by and a purpose to live for.[20] The consciousness of the finiteness of our being makes us yearn for the Beyond in the spirit of the Upaniṣads, from the unreal to the real, from darkness to light and from death to eternal life.[21] And for this, we have to look for the spiritual experience of the seers. C. D. Broad says that there is one thing that speculative philosophy must take into most serious consideration and that is the religious and mystical experiences of mankind.[22] It is they who are in constant touch with the innermost depths of life : and such enlightened ones or sages are the first hand exponents of philosophy.

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[19] Ibid. pp. 154.

[20] Joad, [C. E. M.] : *A Critique of Logical Positivism* [1950] p. p. 29

[21] "Asato mā sad gamay; tamasomā jyotirgamaya; mṛytyor mā amṛatam gamaya.

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[22] *Contemporary British Philosophy*:
Critical and Specutative Philosophy.
Edt. Muirhead [J. H.] 1924:

Validity and Utility of Spiritual Experience

(By : M. S. Deshpande, M. A., Athani)

Introductory :

I must confess, at the outset, that I am not a regular student of philosophy. My approach to the subject under discussion, is that of an ordinary person interested in spiritual life. I shall, therefore, try to deal with this subject as a layman, in the light of what little I have learnt at the feet of Sri. Gurudeva from his talks and literature. I hope my friends well-versed in philosophy, would bear with me.

The subject to be discussed today requires us to tackle the following main problems : i) What is the nature of spiritual experiences ? ii] Are they valid ? If so, what are the main criteria of their validity ? iii] Are they beneficial ? If so, what are their blessings to the individual as well as to the society and humanity ? Let us try to consider them in some detail, seriatim.

Nature of Spiritual Experiences :

Spiritual experience has been aptly described by Sri. Gurudev as "direct, intuitive apprehension of God." God, according to the realised Seers, is

Sat - Cit - Ananda or Existence, Knowledge and Bliss. He is an Eternal Energy that is Omnipresent, Omniscient, Omnipotent, Omni - benevolent and Omni - blissful. God is both Eternal and Infinite. He projects, preserves and dissolves the universe. Though He is without form, He is capable of assuming infinite form. He is both अणोरणीयान् महतो महीयान् । Hence none has been able to fully fathom His depth and realise His Ultimate Nature. Hence He has been regarded as the greatest miracle. In this connection the Gita tells us : " We look upon God as a great miracle; we talk of Him as a miracle; we hear Him as a miracle; and having seen Him, talked about Him and heard Him, nobody has been able to know His Ultimate Nature " (II - 28) " It is God alone who is able to know Himself." (X - 15).

However, Saints of all ages and countries have been able to have glimpses of this Reality in a variety of ways. Their spiritual experiences display a sufficiently rich variety, which is at once immense and infinite and which is always associated, in varying degrees, with the blessed feeling of joy, reverence and awe. These experiences are both beautiful and sublime, both blissful and terrible. There are, according to Sri Gurudev, five main types in them, corresponding to the five main centres of perception in the brain. When these centres are enlivened by the Spiritual Energy, generated by one-pointed meditation, they directly get the experiences of spiritual vision, sound, flavour, fragrance and touch. But each one of these five types includes infinite varieties and their combinations also are infinite. Of these, Morphic (Form), Photic (Light) and Phonic-Auditory (Sound) experiences form a large number. Flavour experiences are less than these; while the experiences of Fragrance and Touch are very rare.

Morphic experiences begin with that of a " Spiriton " or " Bindu " and culminate in the experience of Spacelessness. All other experiences of this type are interspersed between these main experiences, according to the sweet will of God. The Seeker, we are told, visualises super-sensuous lotuses and jasmine flowers, pearls and jewels, swans, eagles, doves and peacocks. He has glimpses of *Śeṣā*s, and a number of such spiritual objects. He gets the visions of the Sun, the Moon and the Stars, of "a flash of lightening," and of the "dazzling light of million suns." He sees brilliant colours of various kinds of which " VIBGYOR " is a faint expression. Saints have also described their experience of spiritual sounds, both sweet and terrible. They have also spoken about the flavour of Nector enjoyed by them. They have described the vision of the Cosmic Eye, of the Self, as well as their visions of Avatars, Prophets and Saints.

To realise the unique nature of these experiences, however, and to enjoy their thrills, we should actually study the inspiring literature of Saints, or better still, to try to have some experiences ourselves. Here, we propose to give three samples only, as space does not allow us to give more.

"When I entered the Sanctuary," says Jnaneswar, " my bodily consciousness was lost· My mind was changed to super-mind. Reason came to a stand-still···· When I saw my own Self, my eyelashe ceased to twinkle. Distinction between night and day was gone. The whole universe was alight and was filled with the resonance of God. I was merged in the ocean of bliss and it was ineffable."

Kabir tells us: " When the lake becomes full on account of the oozing of the mellifluous juice, a sky-reaching sound breaks forth as a submarine volcano in eruption sends its waters into the sky. Various kinds of musical instruments produce each its own harmony. All the Avatars are incessantly and continuosly present before me. And there was an outburst of involuntary praise." (P. G. H. P. 222).

" Please search and find out," says Mahipati-a poet-saint, "where you can get this happiness which proceeds from the saints. I heard eleven kinds of unique sounds followed by a still more peculiar twelth sound, all occupying the whole sky with the sound of Dhimi, Dhimi, Dhimi. That is like the sound of a kettle-drum, filling my heart with great rapture. There was neither rising, nor any setting of the intense Light, both internal and external, and for which there was neither beginning nor end. I enjoyed every day, the pure and sweet ecstatic joy enjoyed by the wise who realise the Self. My Guru's grace, poured down, as it were, the ambrosial juice in the form of the Bliss of self-realisation" (P. G. K. P. 251-52.)

However, the development of these experiences is to be measured by the growth of their variety, intensity, plenitude and blissfulness. It should be determined, says Gurudv, specially by the proportion and progress of the Bliss they impart to the Seekers.

Their Validity:

But how are we to ascertain their validity ? What are the criteria to test it ? Sri Gurudev has enumerated the following five criteria to test their validity : i) Central Initiation ii) Super-sensuousness iii) Continuity iv) Universality and v) Beatification.

i) All genuine spiritual experiences are centrally initiated. They arise from within and not from without. Continuous soulful meditation fills the brain with spiritual energy which enlivens all the centres of perception in it, and makes them active, as a result of which they get direct experiences of the spiritul energy in form of light, sound etc. They arise in the brain and issue from it. (ii) Thus, thess experiences don't require the aid of sense-organs. A blind man can see them and a deaf man can hear them. Hence they are super-sensuous or intuitive. It is the faculty of intuition of the soul that really experiences them and is at the same time the unity of apperception of all of them as well. (iii) As these experiences are perceived directly by the Atman, who transcends time and space, they can be had continuously at all times. "Daily growth in the spiritual experiences is also," we are told, "a vital factor in its continuity and permanance." (B. P. G. P. 233.) (iv) Universality is another chief criterion of spiritual experience. Saints of all times and climes have recorded almost the same types of experiences. Generally Saints do not reveal all their experiences. But in the experiences recorded so far, there is, according to Sri Gurudev, ninety percent similarity. (v) Finally, each and every spiritual experience is and must be blissful. In the beginning the proportion of bliss is, no doubt, very meagre. But gradually it goes on increasing with their growth, and ultimately leaves the Seeker entirely absorbed in supreme bliss.

But " the surest criterion," according to Sri Gurudev, " is the reality of the experience as enjoyed by the mystic himself. It is known only to him and to his Maker. Before it there is no appeal; for it there is no criterion. It is this personal - divine aspect of a mystic's spiritual realisation which stamps it with a peculiar halo and worth. It is in this sense, that mystical experience has been regarded as ineffable." (P. G. H. Intro. P. 2).

All these criteria will enable us to test and determine for ourselves the validity of our spiritual experiences. Those that stand the test should be regarded as valid and those that do not stand the test might be considered as illusions or hallucinations.

There are, however, a few objective criteria as well which we might utilise for testing the experiences of others. Spiritual experiences, we are told, clarify the thoughts, purify the feelings and sanctify the will of the Seekers. This can be observed from their conduct and literature as well as from the service rendered by them to their fellowmen. " It is true that there are temperamental differences between the mystics.. .. Hence, not all mystics need be philosophers; not all mystics need lead a life of emotions; not all mystics need be activists; but wherever true Mysticism is, one of these faculties must pre-dominate and unless we see in a mystic a full-fledged exercise of at least one of these faculties, we may not say that he is entitled to the name of a mystic at all." (P. G. H. Intro. P. 4.)

Their Utility :

If we carefully observe the effects produced by the genuine spiritual experiences on the Saints we will find that they are highly beneficial both to the individual as well as to the society in which he lives and moves. In fact they are veritable blessings to them. Let us cast a glance at the blessed effects produced by them on the Saint himself as well as on the society, through him. We have seen that these experiences tend to bring about clarification of his intellect. Thereby he becomes free from delusions and hallucinations. He gets a clear conception regarding the nature of God, world and soul as well as their mutual relations. He knows the exact ideal of human life and the path leading to it as he has personal experience of both of them. Thus he becomes able to guide the aspirants properly during their pilgrimage to Divinity. He may not be a philosopher. But with his practical knowledge of the main philosophical problems, "he will be of supreme service to humanity by calling their attention from moment to moment to the perception and glory of God." [M. M. Pre. P. 28]

Spiritual experiences also bring about the purification of feelings. They clear the hearts of evil passions and tendencies, by substituting pure ones. The Saint, thus, becomes free from the attractions of lust and lucre, name and fame, power and position. He is full of devotion to God and of love to humanity and creation. It is this pious feeling of devotion that brings him into intimate contact with Divinity, culminating ultimately in the blissful unison with it. This naturally results into disinterested love and service to His creation as well.

Likewise, spiritual experience tends to the sanctification of conduct as well. " A true life of Mysticism, " says Sri Gurudev, " teaches full-fledged morality in the individual and a life of general good to the world. " " In a truly mystical life, " says St. John, " a knowledge of God and His attributes overflows into the understanding from contact with Him and the soul is admitted to the knowledge of wisdom and grace, and the gifts and powers of God, whereby it is made so beautiful and rich. "(Cant. 14. 16. 24. 2.). " A Saint who attains identity with Godhead, sets aside the barriers of castes and creeds and becomes a benefactor of humanity. He attains to atonement with all creation. He experiences a rapturous vision of the Immaculate Spirit whereby the whole world looks transfigured." (R. L. L. P. 238)

Such Saints who enjoy Divine Bliss consider it their sacred duty to impart the same to their followers, because of the natural feeling of compassion as well as of the direct command of the Lord. Not only that. According to Sri. Gurudev, " there is an inexpressible joy in the partaking of bliss, not merely for oneself, but in the company of those who have been the recipients of similar bliss. It is, in this manner, that Saints become responsible for the spreading of God's Gospel. " [B. P. G. P, 269.]. Thus " it becomes the mission of such a realised to spread the Gospel of God wherever and whenever it becomes possible for him to do so. One God, One World, One Humanity becomes his maxim, theopolity his doctrine. " [B. P. G. P. 136]

" These God-realisers constitute a blessed community and on account of their intense love for the afflicted humanity, they live only for their benefaction and betterment, proclaiming from pole to pole, like a rumbling cloud, the eternal Gospel of God, from everlasting to everlasting." [P. G. K. P. 134] Such are the blessings of genuine spiritual experiences.

" Religion : Its relevance to the modern times "

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The modern times are marked by several social upheavals. The whole social life of man is under a process of tremendous metamorphosis and the various traditionally inherited conventions, customs, traditions, beliefs, faiths, attitudes and patterns of social, educational, religious and cultural behaviour have to face opposition, challenge and even trials. Perhaps never in the entire history of the whole human civilization had there come about such a fundamental churning of the human mind on such an enormous scale. Every belief and behaviour-pattern is put to a critical examination. Whatever fails to satisfy an intellectual and rational scrutiny appears to have no chance of general acceptability by the Society. The modern society has a strong empirical and positivistic bias. Not only the traditional behaviour patterns and beliefs are put to a hard rational examination but even the values, which were supposed to be enjoying a priori validity and unquestionable acceptability have been on the anvil of intellectual examination. Religion, which enjoyed great respect from all men and women of all the classes in the past, has been now facing difficult days as it too is being put to the various empirical, intellectual and logical tests, especially of empirical and logical verifiability. In the modern times religion is being supposed to be only a set of rationally unjustifiable superstitions, having belief in trans-empirical, trans-mundane, supernatural and fictitious phenomena, agencies and powers. Religion is being looked upon by the modern man as a business of the credulous, less intellectual and less rational person, having in him, the predominance of feelings and emotions and a strong predisposition for the supernatural influences. It is at present believed that the knowledge of science dispels religious belief.

The more and more exact and scientific knowledge of the world and natural phenomena reclaims increasing territories of religion, and it is further maintained by those who have a firm belief in science, scientific method, rationalism and positivism that in the course of the continuous and unimpeded development of the sciences and technologies a time may come when all the mysteries of the universe may be unravelled completely by science, and then the universe will be only an open book to be read and understood by any intelligent person. Science, no doubt, is making tremendous progress in the field of knowledge of the phenomenal existence, and it will destroy in the future all the innocent beliefs, blind superstitions and fond wishful projections about the trans-mundane existence, cherished by human-beings for the several past centuries. The modern positivist believes that religion has flourished so far on account of the ignorance, credulity, fear, and sense of helplessness in the minds of men in the past. The modern science and technology have enabled the modern man to exercise great and successful control over the nature and the natural agencies and made him aware of the tremendous power of his intelligence with which he could invent and devise methods and instruments which could produce unimaginable power and help him to make his life happy and prosperous. The tremendous material success and prosperity that man has achieved, has, no doubt brought into man a great strength, confidence and with them egoism also. Man has made wonderful attainments to make his life comfortable, rich, prosperous and happy. By his new experiments in space-exploration man has realised that the universe is not finite and limited, but is vast and ever expanding. The belief of the 19th century man that with increased knowledge of science man could know the whole reality and thus unravel the whole mystery of the universe, has now received a great set-back, and he has begun to realise that with every new addition to his knowledge of the universe his ignorance is increasing and that his capacity to know the reality by means of empirical and scientific method has very serious limitations. The ancient man had a profound sense of mystery and of unknowability of the universe. No doubt, compared with the knowledge of the modern man in amount and elaborateness, the ancient man had very little knowledge of the physical universe; he had a sense of littleness, humility, reverence and awe in relation to the powerful, complex and vast universe. Science has its birth in the sense of mystery of the universe; but it tries to unravel the mystery as much as possible by the method of observation, experiment, rational scrutiny and empirical and logical verification. Scientists too have developed the feeling that the more they know of the universe the more do they feel the vastness and unfathomable nature of the universe.

The modern man feels that religion, in the ancient days, had its origin in the feeling of 'fear'. Adam Gowans Whyte says in his book – " The

Religion of the Open Mind" – "Science has proved that all those ideas which theologians imagined to be glimpses under the veil of mystery are merely the visions of human ignorance and fear.

Regarded from another point of view, the evolution of religion has been an advance from the supernatural to the natural. The savage, whose knowledge of the seen was minute, lived in the constant presence of the unseen; we, whose knowledge of the seen is comparatively great, are no longer haunted by the terrors of the unseen. As our knowledge has widened and become better organised, the supernatural has been driven further and further away, until it has faded into a vague mark of interrogation beyond the limits of the unknown. And with it has departed the fear which for so many generations benumbed the brain and paralysed the will of man. ...

In killing fear we have given birth to *hope*– not the hope of escape to another world, but the hope that man, through knowledge, will become the master of his destiny on earth." (pp. 110–-111)

The modern man refuses to worship nature blindly and credulously out of fear and ignorance. He has now lost the fear of the supernatural.

Science is opposed to all kinds of dogmatism and fixity. It aims at unimpeded progress. The modern man believes in the spirit of adventure, experimentation and discovery of the Truth by himself. Whyte therefore says —" Each of us will have to go upon our own pilgrimage towards the ideal. We shall have to gain our knowledge of the spiritual world as we gain it about the everyday world of which it is a reflection by experience, by observation, by studying the origin and growth of things, by making our own synthesis of fact and deduction " (Ibid P. 119). The modern man too is in search of the truth, but he is not prepared to accept uncritically any established scheme of religion simply out of reverence for the great saints and sages and seers of the past who had given their own versions of the reality from their inspired visions. Whyte says– " The end in view, therefore, is not the choice of a religion, but the *Making of a religion*. (Ibid– P. 119)...... It brings religion into closer touch with life itself, because we all have within limits the making of our own lives and we all have our own ideas (borrowed or otherwise) of what life ought to be." (Ibid. P. 120). The aim of the modern man too is to attain *self-realisation;* but the meaning of the term self-realisation has changed in his hands. Whyte explains the meaning of self-realisation in the following manner: " Self-realisation is the uniform impulse; and our success in the art of life depends upon our knowledge of ourselves and the opportunities which our environment holds, or can be meant to hold, for the exercise and development of our faculties. The ideal which supernatural religion has held before us is a *static* one; we are taught to look forward to a life of perfect, unalterable bliss, of eternal rest. The ideal of natural religion is dynamic, it urges man to the essential exercise of his powers; it shows him with each dawn a further horizon towards which he must march." (Ibid. P. 120). Whyte further maintains that the old ideal was the *negation of life*; the new ideal is the *assertion of life*. Its object is to reveal the dignity and magnificence of life, to raise it to its fullest vigour and its highest expression. He advocates a new religion of the *Open Mind* which will not suppress the views of others and recognizes that a multiplicity of opinions is a healthy intellectual state. He has an attitude of treating others and their views with respect and appreciation with a view to evolving and arriving at a wider and profounder truth by unifying and synthesizing them. The modern man chooses to be self-reliant, independent, adventurous and creative.

The modern rationalist creed urges man to do away with fear, with self-depreciation and with cowardly despair of his own powers. It stimulates in man an irrepressible hope and enthusiasm for ending all sufferings and for promoting happiness and well-being of his well-integrated personality. It discourages the old ascetic tendencies of shunning the world thinking it to be an abode of only imperfection and sufferings. It does not love contemplating passively on the mysterious universe as something good and beautiful, being a finished product of the God. It spurs man to live a more abundant and profound life on this earth by *ignoring* the '*other world*'. It believes that prizes of life go to those who live and realise their capacities to the utmost in action as well as in thought. It believes firmly that such self-realisation, in its highest forms, under the guidance of reason is most consistent with the progress of the humanity. It is faith in work, in service, in the development of one's rich potential powers. Whyte says that men must conquer the fear of death. In itself death is as natural as sleep or setting of the sun; but by regarding it as the gateway to a new and problematical existence, supernaturalism has filled it with the dread of the unknown. When man no longer has a fear of the unknown future and fate, there is nothing that should disturb the serenity of death.

The empirically and positivistically biased and oriented minds of the modern men appear to be indifferent to and even antagonistic to the transcendental type of religion. They have no objection to entertain 'faith'; but their faith needs to be rooted firmly in rational conviction of the truth arrived at, after due empirical and scientific verification. The modern man does not wish to annihilate religion, but he is eager to reinterpret it in the context of the findings of the modern science. Whyte says about this view point —"Strictly speaking, all our articles of faith must be held tentatively; they must be regarded as open to amendment and even to contradiction by new facts and broader generalisations. But the principles upon which the new facts are tested and the broader generalisations are constructed remain unchanged, though the results are evolving." (Ibid. P. 33). Thus the men of science and philosophers of empiricism and positivism are prepared to remain content with the uncertainties and probabilities of science rather than accepting unverifiable, unprovable and subtle truths of religion. They look upon Reason as the final authority. A belief in the supernatural and divinely ordained world is, according to them, irrational and it is unconducive to the progress of science and society. Perhaps there is an element of truth in such a contention as the mechanical, institutionalised and codified and rigid system of religion which has come down through generations is in a much distorted and vitiated form. It has ceased to be dynamic and progressive. In a sense and to some extent it was used as a means of exploitation by the ruling powers, resulting into the utter poverty, ignorance and deterioration of the vast masses of people. The traditional institutional ritualistic religion, devoid of the core of spirituality, had become a positive hindrance to the betterment, health, sanity and happiness of the people; and so the famous Marxian slogan that 'religion is opium' appears to contain some truth in it, in a definite sense.

It is clear that the modern man is making efforts to reconstruct religion to suit to the needs of the contemporary civilization and to make it acceptable intellectually to the modern scientifically oriented man Religion is being given a modern and positivistic and this-worldly turn in place of its transcendental, supernatural and other-worldly nature. The new religion is being freed from its mysterious nature and it is being made positivistic and humanistic in its nature, aiming at the maximum betterment and amelioration of man's life on the earth, worrying little about what happens to the soul after death

J. C. Ghose tries to make clear the concept of this Positive Religion clear in his book "Positive Religion" in the following passage : "If religion with the love and worship of the true God can have no basis in positive facts of life and nature there is no God and no religion........ Positive religion eschews all fanciful and mysterious ideas about God, soul, immortality of individual existence, prayer, adoration, divine love, heaven and hell, which are not consistent with reason and science. (P. 429)....... It attempts, however, to show that eschewing all that, there may still be a conduct indispensable for the progress of life, his love towards low individual existences, immortality of the soul, goodness and purity may be essential." (P. 429–30). This kind of religion believes in the reality of evolution and it further believes that higher and higher goodness is surely being evolved in nature. It believes that man is the co-worker with Nature and the Power that is above all. It takes into account all the existing facts of human life, finds out the laws governing them, as to hasten the evolution of the better and truer ideas of God and religion. Ghose says– "It does not ignore any religion but eschews all superstition, all fear, all unreason, all meanness, all selfishness, all oppression of the poor and the weak by the rich and the powerful. (Ibid. P. 434). In keeping all types of inequalities resulting into the exploitation of the ignorant, weak and the poor is growing, and spiritualism too needs a new interpretation. A new personal and social ethics is emerging. The positive religion takes note of this fact of continual progress and humbly indicates a path which is not inconsistent with the strictest rules of science and with the highest ideals which man possesses in his present stage of progress.

Ghose very aptly brings out the function of the positive religion in the following manner : " Positive religion walks the same path with the materialist but shows that the path leads to supernatural goals. It accepts the ideals of conduct of the materialist but shows that they are final and that for the realisation of the highest ideal of the materialist - the religious ideas of the immortality of soul and a Lord of Righteousness, who sees the heart and thus gives all its purity to goodness. It tries to lay down the highest and noblest ideals of conduct according to the present stage of the evolution of man. It is thus indistinguishable from atheistic ethics; but it goes further and shows that all ideas of the good are growing, and God is the sun, which makes the flower of goodness and beauty and love to expand." (Ibid. P. 436).

Thus the positive religion is supposed to be not inconsistent with and adverse to science but it tries to assimilate the findings and attainments of science and strives to make life noble and rich. It does not despise the earthly life and does not seek consolation in the rejection and renunciation of the material life. It does not teach to shun the life of senses though it believes that the life of senses is far more inferior as compared with the life of the self. Religion is neither ethics, nor philosophy, nor wisdom. It is the best of all things, philosophy and art, science and ethics and more and better than they are. Religion can be said to be the supreme spiritual law which overrides the relentless and eternal law of Nature, which sacrifices the individual for the species and the species for the race. It believes that a Supreme Being is necessary for the evolution of higher life. Such a religion does not define God but accepts His influence on life. With Ghose we may further agree that the Positive religion is opposed to all the ideas of the godless moral systems and dry philosophic speculations based on the unreality, the materiality and the impermanence of life and the hollowness of its interests. Its ideal is not the same as of a 'social religion' in which the well-being of man is the final thing to be attained. It lays emphasis on the need for purity and holiness which cannot exist in godless ethical religion. It believes that purity, charity, patience, self-severity, piety are possible only for a man of God rather than for a godless philosopher and moralist. Perhaps it agrees with Kant in holding that goodness is good for its own sake. It further shows that the life and its interests are real and not evil and that striving and fighting for the good is the principle of life, and working for the evolution of the higher life and the better, in cooperation with an ineffable Power, fulfils the purpose of life, which is above any pleasure or happiness. (Ibid. pp. 440-42).

C. A. Ellwood says in his book "The Reconstruction of Religion" we need a 'social religion' which will release the creative energies of man; which will not only inspire faith and hope in the individual's life, but also enthuse communities for progress. Such a religion aims at the inculcation in the individual the spirit of service towards his fellows. (P. 161-164). Ellwood says that the aim of a sound religion must be the production of men and not commodities, and truly speaking, this is in *spiritual* character. Religion does not simply want to make satisfied and happy animals, but it aims at making men perfect by enabling them to manifest the excellence in them. Ellwood decribes the nature of such a social religion in the following words .... "A social religion that merely teaches service as an outward form is not enough. Social religion must, above all, cultivate the inner attitudes and motives which issue in service. A genuinely social religion must teach emotional attitudes which naturally, spontaneously, issue in social service. It must touch the heart of man. It must kindle the sympathetic emotions. Service must be motivated by love to have the highest social value. Religion must become a great device to accumulate, diffuse and transmit altruism in society It must inculcate the love of man as man. It must develop a sense of human brotherhood throughout humanity." (Ibid. P. 168). Thus even the ideal of the welfare, egalitarian and utopian society can be realised only by the proper inner attitude of broadmindedness, sympathy and love for man.

It is difficult to inculcate the attitude of selfless love and respect for others successfully because every individual has an irresistible tendency to love himself, to care for his own personal narrow interests and to confine to his own narrow gains. The attitude of universal goodwill and sympathy can be created only by religion. Religion alone possesses the power to break all the barriers and the dividing lines among men and to unite them emotionally. It is true, as Ellwood says, that material interests and thousand other things divide men. It is only religion which universalizes social values. Science alone cannot bridge the chasms which exist in our human world. What is most essentially required is that men's hearts must be touched ". (Ibid, P. 171).

It is futile to expect that science can unite the people in the world and make them live in a perfect harmony and peace. Science can certainly show the essential identity and universal interdependence of all men. But fellowship is realized not simply through understanding, but even more through sympathy and active goodwill. And this can be done by religion alone.

The real hindrance is the egoism either of individuals or groups or nations or races that prevents a genuine unification of humanity. Ellwood frankly admits that the social sciences have not discovered a way in which the world can be transformed from a world of egoism and strife to one of fellowship except by a leadership of persons of universal sympathy, kindliness, love and friendship for the whole of humanity. (Ibid. P. 174.)

It is obvious that for a peaceful and harmonious social life the wills of the individual members ought not to clash with each other. Individuals can adjust to each other if they agree to exercise control over their personal cravings and claims and if they respect the claims and rights of others with equal consideration. The social conflicts and strifes are mainly due to the overassertive tendencies of the individual egos which lead to aggrandizement and aggressiveness. Such mutually conflicting tendencies can be regulated and overcome when an individual does not suppose his ego to be the final authority, to be worshipped and satisfied. Every individual needs to sacrifice some of his narrow, personal and selfish interests and gains for the larger good of the society. Such a sacrifice can be made voluntarily and spontaneously by the individual if he considers the larger interests and happiness of the whole society superior to his own interests. Good will neecssarily implies self-control, self-restraint and self-sacrifice on the part of the individual for the benefit of the whole. Justice and fairness to other can never be practised unless they are backed by a kind of unconditional good will for every other person. Self-interest as a dominant motive is bound to result into a social conflict, social disharmony and social failure. For ensuring a just, peaceful, harmonious society every member of it needs to restrain his ego and narrow personal self and widen it to identify with the good of the whole society. Religion alone can enable and inspire man to subdue his ego for a selfless service to others; it alone can cultivate altruism. High social morale can be attained essentially through the religious attitude. Religion alone can create, promote and strengthen a genuine sense of devotion and dedication to the higher values of life without having any narrow personal motive to serve, one's narrow interests. Religion alone can generate faith in the higher values of life; it alone can produce respect for purity, piety and holiness of character.

William Hocking says in his famous book " The Meaning of God in Human Experience " that religion is an affair of the heart rather than of head. Religion being universally true it has got to be accessible to all sorts of conditions of men, to the unlearned as well as the learned. (PP. 48-49). The strength of religion depends on the fact that the religious man is free from himself. Religion has a driving force which inspires and spurs people to realise and bring into the life of the individual and of the society the higher ideals of life even at the cost of one's pleasures, happiness, fame, wealth and all material honours.

The external devices to regulate man's life do not do much good to him. As Sri. Aurobindo says the false socialisation of religion has been always the chief cause of its failure to regenerate mankind. It is true that the spiritual element in a religion is often crushed and formalised by its outward aids and forms of machinery often expressed in the ceremonial aspects of worship prayer, rituals, etc. He, therefore, says that the truly spiritual aim in society will regard man not as a body, life or mind, but as a soul incarnated for a divine fulfilment upon the earth. What man needs very much is to *spiritualise* all the aspects of his life. The new spiritual outlook will hold sacred all the different parts of man's life which correspond to the parts of his being, all his physical, vital, dynamic, emotional, aesthetic, ethical, intellectual, psychic evolution, and seen in them instruments for a growth towards a diviner living. All our arrangements to bring about the practice of high social values like equality, liberty, fraternity, peace, harmony, cooperation are little ikely to succeed unless man takes a strong hold upon his inner spiritual being.

As Sri Aurobindo says- " The spiritual aim will seek to fulfill itself in a fullness of life and man 's being in the individual and the race which will be the base for the heights of the spirit . . It will not proceed by a scornful neglect of the body, nor by an ascetic starving of the vital being and an utmost bareness or even squalor as the rule of spiritual living, nor by a puritanic denial of art and beauty and the aesthetic joy of life, nor by a neglect of science and philosophy as poor, negligible or misleading intellectual pursuits ... It will reveal to man the divinity in himself as the light, strength, beauty, good, delight, immortality that dwells within and build up in his outer life also the kingdom of God which is first discovered within us." (Human Cycle P P. 310–11).

The modern man has felt very intensely the need for the moralisation of life. Several schemes of moral and religious education to be imparted in schools and colleges to the younger generation have been prepared. We are thoroughly convinced of the need for a better type of moral life. But the schemes of cultivating moral virtues in men merely by exhortation, advice and intellectual argumentation are obviously failing to attain the aim. A mere new psychological training and conditioning for moral behaviour and the formation of new habits are not enough to mould the moral character of man. There is a clamour and widespread demand for morally good behaviour in all the walks of our life. But by merely forcing several inhibitions we will not be able to cultivate a genuine morality which aims at sublimating and ennobling the instincts of man, unless it is inspired, supported, guided and propelled by a spiritual force within man. Religion and moral virtues are inseparable from each other.

William Hocking says, " Religion is a passion for righteousness, and for the spread of righteousness, conceived as a cosmic demand. " (" Living Religions and a World Faith. " P.26). In fact, to be religious is to be morally virtuous or righteous. We may also say that unless a person is morally pure and pious he cannot get in the real sense of it the experience of the Divine. Moral purification and righteousness are the most important preconditions of a religious life. Moral purity acts as a means to a genuine religious experience. A mere learning of moral theories and moral discussions cannot bring about a better moral character and righteousness in men.

Our education and all thinking are only on the levels of mind and intellect. We are unable to elevate our will to the higher consciousness. We cannot attain perfection by applying our mental ideas to the Spirit, which is very much different from and superior to the mind and intellect. In fact there is the basic and inherent limitation of the mind and intellect to raise our life to a higher spiritual consciousness. As Sri Aurobindo correctly points out the mind and the intellect are not the key-power of our existence; for they can only trace out a round of half truths and uncertainties and revolve in that unsatisfying circle. But concealed in the mind and life, in all the action of the intellectual, the aesthetic, the ethical, the dynamic and practical, the emotional, sensational, vital and physical being there is a power that sees by identity and intuition and gives to all these things such truth and such certainty and stability as they are able to compass. So long as this power has to work for the mind and life and not for itself to work in their forms and not by its own spontaneous light we cannot make any good use of this discovery. Thus if man wants to lead a life of genuine morality it cannot be done by forming out-ward habits artificially simply by impressing on his mind his civic duties and duties of citizenship. What is really most important is that man's moral purity and piety must issue from his genuine spiritual consciousness, the intense awareness of his self which transcends all its finite manifestations and yet which expresses itself through all the concrete phenomena of nature and the body, mind and intellect of man. Man cannot get spiritual experience as long as his experiences are centred round his ego; and when his ego-pivot is abandoned and his ego-hunt ceases, then man gets his first real chance of achieving spirituality in his inner and outer life. (Human Cycle. P. 342).

The spiritual persons live not in their ego but in their self. Freedom from ego is the most important requirement of the spiritual life. It is wrong to belive that man cannot live without his ego-self. What is required is not the elimination and annihilation of the ego but a substitution of the self for the ego. When a man thus discovers his divine self within himself and lives in it he would have a unique consciousness of the undivided unity of the whole existence and an unending joy and bliss.

Even if we accept the religion of humanity as our ideal it is not easy to attain it. The enemy of all real religion is human egoism, the egoism of the individual and of the class and of the nation. Sri Aurobindo raises the most important difficulty even about the possibility of realising the religion of the humanity which has an earthly aim. He says- " But this is the question whether a pure intellectual and sentimental religion of humanity will be sufficient to bring about so great a change in our psychology. The weakness of the intellectual idea, even when it supports itself by an appeal to the sentiments and emotions, is that it does not get at the centre of one's being. The intellect and the feelings are only instruments of either its lower external form or of the inner and higher man, servants of the ego or channels of the soul." (Human Cycle P. 762). The tragedy is that when the high values such as Freedom, Equality and Brotherhood are pursued by the Ego they get distorted and vitiated in their realisation. Sri Aurobindo says " Freedom, equality, brotherhood are three godheads of the soul; they cannot be really achieved through the external machinery of the society or by man as long as he lives only in the individual and the communal ego. When the ego claims liberty, it arrives at competitive individualism. When it asserts equality, it arrives first at strife, then at an attempt to ignore the variations of Nature, and, as the sole way of doing that successfully it constructs an artificial and machine-made society. A society that pursues liberty as its ideal is unable to achieve equality; a society that aims at equality will be obliged to sacrifice liberty. For the ego to speak of fraternity is for it to speak something contrary to its nature. All that it knows is association for the pursuit of common egoistic ends and the utmost that it can arrive at is a closer organisation for the equal distribution of labour, production, consumption and enjoyment." (Ibid PP. 763-64).

In fact as Sri Aurobindo says Brotherhood exists only in the soul and by the soul; it can exist by nothing else. For this brotherhood is not a matter either as physical kinship or of vital association or of intellectual agreement. When the soul claims freedom, it is the freedom of its self-development, the self-development of the divine in man-in all his being. When it claims equality, what it is claiming is that freedom equally for all and the recognition of the same soul, the same godhead in all human beings. When it strives for brotherhood, it is founding that equal freedom of self-development on a common aim, a common life, a unity of kind and feeling founded upon the recognition of this inner spiritual unity. These three things are, in fact, the nature of the soul.

It is the practical recognition of this truth, it is the awakening of the soul in mass and the attempt to get him to live from his soul and not from his ego, which is the inner meaning of religion, and it is that to which the religion of humanity also must arrive before it can fulfil in the life of the race. (Ibid. PP. 764-65).

Psychological Aspect of Religious Experience.

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SYNOPSIS

Religion is one of the numerous ways in which man re-acts to the universe. Religion is an essential element in his being. From the earliest times it has been a most powerful factor in the progress both of the individual and of the race.—Description of Religious Experience of ordinary men with reference to the experiential element in religious belief--Nature of Mystic Experience, an intense and major form of Religious Experience—Description of the behaviour of a mystic and of an ordinary religious man – Interpretation of Religious and Mystic Experience, in terms of the concepts of psychology with reference to traditional and rational elements in religious belief, suggestion, libido and its redirection, introversion and extroversion, insticts of fear, herd, self-preservation, self-submission and sex. Psychology of ritual, cult, worship and prayer as external aspects of religion – Conclusion. Task of psychology is one of objective study of Religious consciousness and not one of justification of the Religious Experience. It has to show how human mind works in relation to religion and the idea of

God. Problem concerning the objective reality of religious experience is left to philosophy.

Part I

Opinions difler as to the meaning of religion and the role that it should play in human life. Religion is a way of life and as such an emotional attitude of the individual to the transcendent principle or principles. It, though involves a set of moral principles cannot be reduced to or equated with them. Religious faith springs from the pressure of human needs, and these needs in their turn depend on the human nature which reveals itself in them.[1]

we may venture to descrebe religion as one of the numerous ways in which man reacts to the universe.[2] Religion is to be regarded as natural to man, as an essential element in his being. It is his distinguishing characteristic to react to the universe in a religious way. The instincts and tendencies which find their ultimate expression in religious ideas and practices, however crudely set forth, are known to be universal and are therefore to be regarded as rooted in man's nature as such. It belongs to his most intimate self.[3] From the earliest times until now religion has been a most powerful factor in the progress both of the individual and of the race. In all history there is nothing more impressive than the part played by religious ideas and practices in moulding the thought and conduct of men. The whole social life of men, their pursuits and occupations, their arts and crafts, the rudiments of their science and of their morality, have been closely bound up with religlon. As Goethe says, ' men are only creative in poetry and art as long as they are religious; without religion they are merely imitative lacking in originality. ' What is true of art and poetry is true of every department of human life and activity. In all of them religion has its contribution to make and its work to do.[4] Modern practical psychologists, recognising that religion is natural to man are beginning to lay much stress on the danger of the repression of religion and the atrophy of the religious emotions. They argue that religion is necessary to a wholesome and well balanced life and that lacking it, men lack something which is bound up with their well-being. So in the practice of psychotherapy religion is coming to take a very important place as one of the chief agents in obtaining for the sick in mind and body, poise and peace. Dr. Hadfield, e. g., writes ' speaking as a student of psychotherapy, who, as such has no concern with theology, I am convinced that the Christian religion is one of the most valuable and potent influences that we possess for producing that harmony and peace of mind and that confidence of soul which is needed to bring health and power.

"Religion of the highest and fullest character can co-exist with a complete absence of belief in revelation in any straightforward sense of the word, and in that kernel of revealed religion, a personal God."[6] Buddhism, Jainism, Sankhya are such religions which have survived inspite of the absence of the notion of personal God in them.

There are mainly three roots of religious belief which are called traditional, the experiential and the rational elements. The experiences which have been included in the experiential root are so varied that we may conveniently further classify them as follows:

[a] The experiences of beauty, harmony and beneficence in the external world; in conflict with ugliness, disorder and malevolence.

[b] The moral conflict i. e. the conflict in the individual 's own mind between the impulses he recognises as evil and those he believes to be good.

[c] The inner emotional experiences connected with the idea of God.[7]

In the prose and poetry of nature mystics we come across the description of the religious feeling. The experience which these passages are trying to describe is an emotional relationship to natural objects. Such experiences lead to pantheism and to the positive element in pantheism–the doctrine of immanence. But in certain patterns of religious temparament this type of experience is absent. To a mentality hostile to the idea of divine immanence in Nature the experience would not occur, or if it did it would be suppressed as something illusory or evil. The idea that God expresses Himself in the beauty of Nature implies an optimistic attitude towards the external world. To the unreflective man healthy in mind and body and not much burdened by ultimate moral problems, this attitude is a natural one. For him there is no conflict when he sees Nature as the face of God. The matter is however different with the sensitive soul of the Buddha, tortured by the sight of the misery and cruelty of the world, or of St. Paul acutely conscious of sin in himself and in mankind. To such mentalities, Nature is not good. For them the experience we are describing would come into conflict with the stronger experience of the reality of pain or evil.[8]

The moral conflict which exists in the mind itself results from the fact that the individual finds his own immediate desires opposed by an outside requirement–the moral law. It is a genuine and important psychological fact.[9] The experience of the moral conflict does tend to result in religious belief. The distinctive contribution which the moral element makes to the conception of God is that it tends to conceive God as the supreme lawgiver.[10]

The religious experience which occurs to ordinary religious person appears in the form of emotional experiences. Many examples of this kind of experience are to be found in the chapter on " The Reality of the Unseen " in William James's ' Varieties of Religious Experience. ' The characters of such experience are the sense of an intimate pervading presence, the sense of a deepened significance in life and the sense of a loss of identity.[11] The influence of beautiful natural scenery, and of music or poetry,-of any thing, in short that tends to arouse aesthetic emotion–is likely in religious persons to induce, indirectly, religious emotion.[12] The experience of God's presence or the mild and constant sense of the Divine is consistent with great activity and can abide with many people through a large part of the working day. Such experience is termed by Pratt as milder form of mysticism.[13] This form of experience is common-place and is found in normal persons and is never carried to extremes. This he distinguishes from the intense form of mystic experience of great mystics. The difference is that between the seed and the flower.

To turn now to the mystic experience proper, it is a major and intense form of religious experience. From time to time there have appeared on the earth men and women who have achieved a state of consciousness and a spiritual stature far surpassing that of the majority of ordinary individuals. Such state of consciousness to which all may aspire only the truly religious have been able to achieve....

These are the great mystics of the world, saints, God–realisers, 'seers,' who have claimed that they have undergone such intense experience. It is the direct, immediate, first—hand intuitive apprehension of God . . .

It is a'sort of supersensous experience. It signifies the highest attitude of which man is capable. It is a silent enjoyment of God.[14] It is a sublime experience of contact with a greater reality in which all sorrows vanish and all problems are transcended in an illumination of the unspeakable joy and wonder. This is called Cosmic consciousness.[15] Persons before Christ had referred to this condition as illumination, brahmic bliss, samadhi, nirvana, satori etc. It is a state of ecstasy.[16] What constitutes the essence of mystic realisation is an unfaltering, unbending, unending love of God.[17] William James mentions four marks which when experience has them make it mystical. They are ineffability, noetic quality, transiency and passivity.

It may be asked 'If the experience comes suddenly to some why should it not come to all?' The answer is that it only comes where there has been long study, deep thinking, loving service. A continuous preparation and self-discipline preceded Dr. Richard Bucke's vision. If we want to become 'seers' there is nothing for it but to work at cleansing the mirror of what Blake called 'the Doors of Perception,' in other words, at achieving sufficient inner development and clarity for the light to shine through us. There is the encouraging promise that 'He who seeks finds, and to him who knocks, the door will be opened'. To be told 'Few there be that find it' would be depressing. But all, however lowly their achievements, can have their feet on the road that leads to fuller life. To be a seeker is what matters. The Kingdom of God or Kingdom of Heaven is within us and around us, the way to it is straight and narrow and found only by a few, but it is in fact the 'pearl of great price' for the possession of which a merchant might well sacrifice everything that he owes.[18] There is a definite pathway to God. Christ's teaching that the way is no primrose path has been confirmed by all true mystics, ancient and modern.[19] A systematic self-training is required to travel along the path. This course of training consists of two parts or stages, one negative, the other positive. The negative part is technically known as the "Purgative" stage, while the positive part is called the "meditative" or "illuminative" stage. Moral purity is the condition of the mystic life. The soul that is filled with the love of sin will have no room for the love of God. The mind that is burning with hot lusts, that is the prey of tempestuous passions and wordly desires of any kind, can never give to the thought of God that quiet contemplation which is the condition and the beginning of "God's presence." Moral purity of the ordinary kind is not sufficient for him who aspires to an extraordinary mystic life. The mind must be freed from thei nterruptions and distractions of the body at any cost. Hence the common expedient of what is known as "mortification" -or asceticism. These two preliminary stages lead to the third 'unitive' stage. This third stage of the mystic progress is for many a mystic, and especially for the greatest, a life rather than a particular experience. It involves a special type of experience which is regarded as the mystic state *par excellence*. This experience is commonly known as ecstasy.[20] Hindus, Buddhists, Mohammedans and Christians all have cultivated mystic consciousness methodically. In India training in mystical insight has been known from time immemorial under the name of Yoga. Yoga means the experimental union of the individual with the divine. It is based on persevering exercise; and the diet, posture, breathing, intellectual concentration, and moral discipline vary slightly in the different systems which teach it. The yogi or disciple, who has by these means overcome the obscurations of his lower nature sufficiently, enters into the condition termed *samadhi*, and comes " face to face with facts which no instinct or reason can ever know. "[21] Such spiritual Sadhana is utmost necessary to realise God. Gurudeo Ranade, being himself a great mystic achieved God-realisation through long and arduous spiritual Sadhana, inspite of frequent physical break-downs and numerous other difficulties for over five decades with the initiation from and the guidance and Grace of his Great Sadguru.[22]

Gurudeo in his book 'Pathway to God in Kannada literature' writing about the effects of God-realisation, has described the behaviour of a mystic. He also gives a similar description of effects of God-realisation in the life of Tukaram in his book 'pathway to God in Marathi Literature.' Both Tukaram and Purundardas have said that the God-vision has made them mad. This is divine lunacy which is the result of intoxication caused by the wine, the Name of God. He lives a life of a Jivanmukta who has freed himself from the rebirth. He indulges in such activities which lift up his fellow-beings who have fallen and are suffering in the pit of samsara. It is one of his primary functions to lift up those, who have fallen into the pit. He identifies himself with all forms of existence, cosmic, psychic and epistemological. The saint does not care for the welfare of his own body. He makes God the cynosure of all his endeavours, and is filled with over-flowing devotion to Him, and this unswerving and intense devotion would result in his disregarding his own bodily pleasure.[23] There is a beautific element in his divine lunacy, namely the saint having put an end to all egoism and hypocrisy, attains the knowledge of Reality. We find such a saint leading a life of solitary independence. He never bothers himself about his relatives as his only relative is God.[24]

As a result of the moral endeavour the saint attains to the poise of absolute equality treating alike friend and foe, happiness and sorrow. – Dejection and disappointment cease to affect him; infatuation cannot overcome him, sorrows cannot torment him. He becomes death to the very God of Death. When the aspirant rises to such moral heights, he gets into mystic raptures.[25] He is not elated when people praise him to the skies, nor does he feel depressed when they speak ill of him. *Samata* or *Samatva* which is mentioned by Gita resembles this state of mind.[26] The saint has conquered fear, is free from attachment to ephemeral existence, from dejection and despair, and having realised his identity with the ultimate Reality, he is unaffected by duality; in one word he rises superior to all lower or baser emotions and in this sense becomes a real conqueror. He becomes the embodiment of highest morality.[27] Complete self–surrender to God is seen in him. These God–realisers constitute a blessed community and on account of their intense love for afflicted humanity they live only for its benefaction and betterment proclaiming from pole to pole like rumbling clouds the eternal Gospel of God from everlasting to everlasting.[28] Gurudeo Ranade took it as his mission, like that of all saints, to spread the Gospel of God whenever and wherever possible. This mission is the outcome of the compassion which mystics feel for all humanity, this compassion in its turn, is born of their सर्वात्म भाव, unison with everything and everyone due to God-realisation.[29]

An ordinary religious man practises rituals, offers prayers to and worships the God of his choice. In times of need he appeals to God for his grace and help of which he is sure. He observes vows sanctioned by his religion and regards everything as sacred. He is sincere in what he does. He does everything that he is called upon to do in the name of and for the service of God. He surrenders himself to the will of God. He takes delight in constant reading of sacred books and hearing about God and meditating on Him.

Part II

Today, thanks to men like Stout and James, Shand and McDougall, Charcot and Janet, Freud and Jung–to mention but a few–we are acquiring a knowledge of the laws of mind and the conditions of its working. This new knowledge is giving us an entirely new insight into the meaning of phenomena like revelation, conversion, grace, salvation, demoniac possession, miracles of healing, prophecy, communion with the divine, and many others. Knowledge of psychology is showing us that these phenomena, though perfectly described facts of experience, need not be interpreted in the traditional way. They do not require us to postulate supernatural beings outside ourselves as their cause; they can be accounted for by the natural workings of the individual human mind. But this need not diminish the value of the phenomena.[30]

The traditional element is one of the main roots of the belief in God. Others being the experiential and the rational elements. From the early years of his life man is under the direct influence of the tradition. The religion he follows and his belief in God are partly due to the influence of tradition. Even what he regards his own inner experiences, the products of his self-determined mental life are moulded very much by his social environment.

Primitive religious belief is not at first a product of reasoning process but of vague feelings and illogical deductions. Reflection in words appears early, even though its function at first may be only to justify beliefs already held on other grounds. The reasoning processes lead up to or confirm a belief in God without any attempt at a philosophical discussion of their validity. Even if it could be shown that any or all of the arguments for the existence of God were invalid, they would still remain of psychological interest, for they have provided the foundation of the religious belief of men.[32]

The method by which our beliefs are influenced by other people is not, on the whole, reasoned demonstration. The child does not have the existence of God proved to it in its religious lessons. It is still true in later life that the simple affirmation of religious doctrines by a person for whom we have respect, or the mere fact of the holding of such doctrines by persons amongst whom we live, may have an authority over us compared with which the influence of the most convincing chain of reasoning is negligible. The method by which beliefs are transmitted to us otherwise than by reasoned demonstration is by suggestion.[33] Suggestion is always of great importance; and correspondingly religious ritual and service is often so arranged so as to promote suggestibility. The dim light, the familiar words, the fixed postures, the isolation from other influences, the general sense of awe–the whole atmosphere is such as to promote a receptive or suggestible state of mind.[34]

It seems to be taken for granted that, whether normal or abnormal the contents of the subconscious mind form a very important element in the religious consciousness.[35] Speaking of the unconscious William James remarks, " It is also the fountain-head of much that feeds our religion. In persons deep in religious life the door into this region seems unusually wide open: at any rate experiences making their entrance through that door have had emphatic influence in shaping religious history".[36] Dr. Sanday approaches the question from the mystical side and argues that the deepest truth of mysticism and of the states of which we have been speaking as mystical belongs not so much to the upper region of consciousness–the region of symptoms, manifestations, effects–as to the lower region of the unconscious.[37] There is no doubt that the unconscious is a storehouse of impressions, and experiences by which the conscious life is unquestionably affected under certain conditions. If the appeal of religion is to be successful it follows that there must be something in us which is capable of responding to it, and this will often be found, not merely in a nature religiously inclined, but in previous religious ideas and impressions which have been forgotten or repressed. In the psychical past of most of us religious ideas and influences have played some part and remain stored up ready to emerge when occasion offers. Most cases of sudden conversion illustrate the power of unconscious religious inclinations. It must not be supposed, however, that the subconscious can be made responsible for all cases of conversion, still less that it can be regarded as a substitute for objective spiritual influences, or for the action of God, upon the soul. It is a factor in religious experience which has to be taken account of and provides an explanation of phenomena not otherwise easily explicable. That religious ideas and experiences in adult life may be conditioned and even originated by past suggestions that have long been hidden out of sight in the unconscious region goes without saying.[38]

R. H. Thouless suggests a psychological explanation of mystical conversion saying that it is the redirection of the whole of the *lidido* into the religious sentiment. In other words it is the religious sublimation of the entire instinctive nature.[39] In adolescent conversion effects of suggestion may play a large part. Nevertheless it would appear to be unsound to dismiss them as merely a result of suggestion. There is no reason for supposing that suggestion could ever originate such a process as conversion, unless there were already in the mind a conflict which predisposed it to conversion. There is one repression which normally accompanies adolescence and that is the repression of the growing sex-instinct (or love instinct) itself. The conversion of adolescence appears to be simply the sudden solution of this conflict, at least temporarily, by the sublimation of the repressed love instinct into religious channels. Both adolescent and mystical conversion are the result of sublimation of the libido into religious channels; but in mystical conversion, it is not only that part of the libido specialised in the sex-instinct that is sublimated but the whole of the libido employed in the activities and affections of this world life.[40]

Dr. Jung distinguishes two types of men : The *introvert* who has withdrawn his libido from the external world and is interested mainly in thought and the *extrovert* who is interested in things in action in the oustide world, and in feeling rather than thought. He also applies the words *introversion* and *extroversion* to the ways of disposing of the libido characteristic of the *introvert* and *extrovert* respectively.[41] Clearly the attitude towards the external world in the initial stages of mystical conversion is that of introversion

But libido is directed towards an object which is believed in by the mystic as an external reality. Because this reality is God this may be described as *deoversion* to be distinguished from the ordinary introversion. This process, as found in the greater mystics appears to be related rather to the health-giving introversion described by the analytical psychologists than to the regressive introversion of dementia praecox. It is followed by a phase of extroversion in the Spiritual Marriage, in which the mental growth during the earlier phase is made profitable for work in the outside world.[42] Those who have studied mystical phenomena from the point of view of mental pathology have pointed out the resemblance between some of the phenomena of mysticism and the symptoms of hysteria. Baron Von Hugel in the second volume of his book, 'The Mystical Elements in Religion' shows how they can be paralleled in the life of St. Catherine of Genoa, particularly during her last illness.[43] There seems to be no sufficient ground for supposing that mysticism is merely hysteria misunderstood by superstitious and wonder-loving age. But there can be little doubt that certain forms of mysticism and hysteria are on their psycho-physical side closely related. Possibly the extent of their connection is that both are charcterised by a dissociation of personality, and the symptoms they have in common are the symptoms of this dissociation.[44]

We now come to the question: "Is the religious sentiment based on an instinct, and if so on what instinct?" Some writers have spoken of religious instinct implying that the religious sentiment is based on an instinct specifically religious. For example, Starbuck speaks of religion as a deep-rooted instinct, and compares it with hunger and the desire for exercise. Others have said that religion is based on the sex-instinct. This has been maintained by American writers on psychology of religion who have styled themselves *erotogenesists*. Mr. Trotter seems to consider that religion is founded on the herd-instinct. The theory of Prof. G. Elliot Smith and Mr. W. J. Perry, that the first impulse towards certain early religions was the effort to find givers of life which should preserve the individual's existence, would make such religions a growth from the instinct of self-preservation. The instincts of self-preservation seem clearly to be connected with the *Providence element* in religion – that element which looks to God as a provider for our immediate needs – and with a part of the demand for immortality. The sex-instinct is similarly connected with the demand for a worthy object of love and with a demand for a giver of love.[45]

The relation between religion and the instinct of sex is a question which has been forced to the front by recent tendencies in psychology. We need not think that this relationship between religion and the instinct of sex degrades religion. It is implicitly recognised by many of the mystics to whom the love of God has seemed to be the end of those desires which they thought could find only imperfect satisfaction in human love. Dr. G. Stanley Hall means it as no reproach to religion when he says: "True piety is earthly love transcendentalised, and the saint is the lover purified, refined and perfected".[46] A Mohammedan poet, Jami praises human love because it leads the soul to divine love. He considers that experience of human love must necessarily precede the knowledge of divine love; but he gives the warning (typical with all religion with a strong mystical trend) that the soul must not rest in human love but must value it only because of the possibility of its sublimation to the religious end. Certain facts may be quoted to show and explain the connection between religion and sex. Certain types of religious excitement and certain phases of religious development show a correspondence with the times of crises of the sex-life. This we can see in the life of Akka-

Mahadevi, Mirabai, St. John of the Cross. The expressions of religious emotion [particularly those of the mystics] are very generally in the language of human love. One such vivid description of the mystic union is given by St. John of the Cross in the Dark Night of the Soul. Religion has, on the whole, tended to attach a great value to chastity; in other words, on the total suppression of the sex-instinct. There has been a tendency in historical Christianity to regard marriage rather as a concession to human weakness than as anything good in itself.

The evidence seems to point to the sex instinct as part of the foundation of religion. It lends no support to the view that this is the whole of religion. It is not merely a suppression of an instinct followed by the utilisation of its energy for the ends of religion. It is rather that the sentiment of religion is built in part on the innate mental disposition called the sex-instinct, just as is the sentiment of human love.[47]

Dr C. G. Jung in his psychology of the Unconscious puts forward the thesis that religion is largely an expression of the tendency to regression to the attitude of infantile dependence on the parent, which is characteristic of an unsatisfactory development of the individual's love life.

That this exists as an element in religion need not be doubted, but there seems to be no reason for supposing that it is the whole of religion. The attitude of dependence is xpressed in such hynms as the ones beginning " Safe in the arms of Jesus " and "I rest my soul on Jesus".[48]

In the International Journal of Psycho analysis for March 1921 which claims to be a psychoanalytic study of the Christian Creed the author in his article takes phrases of the creed and states their psychoanalytic meaning in the usual Freudian language. The idea of *God the Father* is stated to be a father substitute adopted by the adolescent with a dominant *Oedipus complex* who finds the actual father inadequate. " The ultimate causes of Father symbol are the repressed parental complexes that are satisfied by this belief." The predicate of *Almighty* results from the effort of the unconscious to recover the omnipotence of the babe in the womb. " The virgin Mary," we are told, " is an especially attractive object of worship because she satisfies an unconscious longing of the infant boy to supplant the father or to think him away." Thouless regards this as unsupported speculation [49]

However the religious attitude of the individual to an external deity can be understood as an example of projection. The unconscious Oedipal conflict and the mental distress that it causes is resolved and reduced, to some extent, by projecting it on to an external reality, God. Between such a God on whom the individual projects the unconscious material and himself there is less conflict because God is so powerful as to seriously weaken the rebellion; and this external reality is so idealized as to render resentment and hostility less appropriate. The various mechanisms like confession, penance, renunciations of various kinds provide socially approved means for relieving the guilt caused by Oedipal desire and counteracting its influence. (WM. P. Alston in his article on Religion in the Encyclopaedia edited by Paul Edwards.) Dr. Rivers commenting on the assumption underlying the conclusions of psycho-analysts rightly observes that it is possible that the infantile sexuality insisted on by Freudians is in some real sense an initial factor in religion as in all other human activities; but that this is not a fact of such importance that it dwarfs all the other factors in the building up of religion and makes the question of the truth of its objects a trivial one.[50]

A religious man works with a fear of divine punishment, surrenders himself to the will of God, desires to enjoy His company, appeals for His help and favour. All this behaviour needs be explained with reference to fear, self-submission, herd and appealing instincts. The suppression of the instincts of sex, self-assertion, nutrition and herd is regarded by the mystic as of high religious value. The suppression of the normal mode of satisfaction of the herd--instinct is a preliminary condition of more intensive religious life. This is the reason why mystics use chastity, meakness, fasting and solitude as necessary methods of approach to the highest religious life. It must be clear from the foregoing account that religion is a complex growth from a variety of instincts. Instinctive basis of a religious activity often gives its own colouring to that activity.

We now turn to the most important and most familiar of the external and practical aspects of religion. These are the phenomena that come under the designations of ritual, cult and worship. These may be regarded as the outward manifestations of inner belief and experience. Both in primitive and more advanced civilizations religious cultus is intimately bound up with man's conception of his welfare and serves to regulate all his relations with his fellows and with the world around him.[51] He performs these acts not only to propetiate unseen powers but also to conserve his own well-being present and future as well as that of the community to which he belongs. Hindu worship is largely based on sacrifice – the main object of which is to secure the favour of the gods and avert their wrath. The prime motive behind all worship wherever it is found and whatever forms it may assume is an overwhelming sense of dependence on the gods and a desire to obtain the benefits they have to bestow.[52] In worship a group of persons try as a group to get into relationship with God. Here we find at work all those very powerful influences which are dependant on the gregarious instincts. For this reason worship may be felt to be valuable even when group sentiment is not strong, for the individual finds that he can better feel himself in relationship with God when he seeks Him in company with others. The contagion of feeling resulting from herd-suggestion gives him depth of emotional experience which the ordinary man does not attain in his own private devotions.[53] Another important element to be noted in maintaining ritual and shaping the forms of worship is man's desire to give some visible form to the objects of his belief and reverence. The worship of idols, visible images and pictures, the virtual worship of saints speak of this desire. Even where the ideal of worshiping in spirit and in truth is recognized and pursued, there is a constant tendency to hark back to more material forms, and this has to be reckoned with as a tendency always operative in man's communion with God. The psychological effect of it is to deepen the sense of reality in worship, and it lies at the root of every form of religious symbolism. One of the best illustrations of its power is seen in Buddhism where a religion, originally without gods or cult has developed an elaborate form of image worship in response to the needs of its adherents.[54]

The practice of prayer in one or other of its many forms is a universal religious phenomenon of the greatest importance and interest to the student of psychology. Prayer is an expression of the religious consciousness. It is an appeal for help under the stress of misfortune private or racial. It witnesses to the widespread and almost instinctive impulse of man to approach the powers around and above him in such a way as that he shall avert their wrath and secure their favour. He believes that they can be so approached and that his words, attitudes and actions can be so shaped as to further, if not actually to secure, the fulfilment of his wishes. To this end he is, no doubt, largely moved by fear and by the instinct of self-preservation. In most prayers petitionary element plays a large part.[55] An interesting feature in the ritual of more advanced peoples is the use of the divine name in prayer, and the belief that the right utterance of the name adds potency to the petition.[56] Those with whom prayer is a habit entertain no doubt that their prayers even for material blessings are directly answered, and the mass of evidence adduced is certainly impressive. While it is not necessary to accept all that is sometimes claimed for prayer, we can hardly refuse to believe that it does produce certain effects which would not otherwise take place.[57] If prayer is useless as a spiritual exercise it tends by a natural psychological process, to degenerate. It is to be noted that prayer contributes a good deal to the moral and spiritual development of those who pray. Regarded as a producer of subjective effects prayer is clearly of the nature of reflective auto-suggestion undertaken with the intention of bringing about changes in that sum of mental dispositions which we call character. Even regarded merely as auto-suggestion, it is probable that prayer must always be more effective than auto-suggestion deliberately and self-consistently carried out. For, precisely that element which was seen to be most essential and most difficult to attain in reflective auto-suggestion–the abandonment of voluntary effort–is provided naturally by the mental attitude of prayer.[58] It is sometimes contended that prayer is nothing but the projection of our desires and aims on something outside of and above ourselves. It is admitted that such a process is natural as a survival from our infantile condition of dependence on the bounty of others–a dependence easily transfered from the physical to the spiritual sphere. This may be all perfectly true as a true description of the mental processes involved in praying, but it neither reduces prayer to subjective autosuggestion nor does it laugh it out of court on the other. Prayer is not an activity undertaken merely for the sake of its effects on the mind or the character of the subject, but primarily for the purpose of coming into communion with, or otherwise affecting the Being to whom the prayer is addressed. Its subjective effects, though important, are generally only incidental. Prayer, therefore, cannot be identified with auto-suggestion. To identify them is to eviscerate prayer of all objective spiritual content.[60]

Conclusion :

We have now reached a stage in our discussion at which we are to address two important questions to ourselves regarding the value and validity of religious experience. Of what value is the religious experience ? Is the religious experience, which ordinary men and mystics alike claim to have, valid ? The second question raises the problem of the objective basis of religious experience in particular. Psychology, being an empirical science undertakes an objective study of the religious experience. Its task is descriptive and not evaluative. So psychology is not concerned with the problems suggested by the above questions. Nevertheless the study of religious consciousness made by psychology suggests possible answers to these questions leaving the task of establishing the truth of those answers to the philosophy of religion.

The sceptic who has never experienced anything akin to ecstacy, and the pure rationalist who claims that reason is the only approach to knowledge will be very dubious about the reports of the mystic and will tend to dub him an escapist indulging in phantasy in order to cut himself off from the trials and miseries of life. The exact opposite is the truth.[61] One who has a firm belief in the World Beyond and in God as a result of the influence of tradition and education is able to experience the presence of God everywhere. This experience is of considerable value for him as it places him in a better position to understand the universe around him in all its complexity. It also gives him a better perspective and insight into the problems of life. It shapes him into a moral individual. It may pave the way for God realisation which he values more as it is the supreme goal of human life. So far as mystic experience is concerned mystics all over the world have declared with one voice that their experience, being the source of inexhaustible joy, is a priceless pearl for buying which they do not mind sacrificing all their belongings. This shows how valuable the experience is for them. If man's highest activity is to love God, mysticism may have a value of its own entirely independent of any usefulness it is found to have in this world. Even if we do not like mystics, we certainly prefer them to lunatics. It is true that mysticism tends often to incapacitate its subject for activity in this world,but even on this score it may be justified if we look to the life of guided activity which is its end, and not the stage of turning away from the world which is only preparatory to that end.[62] Thouless quotes an interesting illustrative example of a Swiss lady who was the directress of a Protestant school for young girls and her mystical career. He has explained by tracing the development of her mystical life the value of it for her life. True mysticism is characterised by an enlargement of personality and striking evidence of such enlargement was found in her·The manner of dealing with her libido by its sublimation into religious channels is one which reasulted in an enrichment, and not in an impoverishment, of her character. Her mysticism played an essential part in bringing stability and happiness into her life which seemed to have been blasted in its beginnings by the wickedness of another person.[63] Mystics who have made deepest impact were not only good, wise, imaginative and brave; many have had intellectual capacity above the average. They were experts in religion. It is unfortunate to note that the Freudians have given a very black picture of mysticism. They are not justified in reducing religion and mysticism to neurosis.

The psychologists on the basis of the study of the lives of great mystics of the world, their reports, devotional songs and other writings and also on the basis of careful observation the behaviour of religious persons and mystics have tried to answer the question, How does the human mind work in relation to religion and the idea of God? In their enthusiasm to give correct answers supported by their investigations some have gone to the extent of suggesting that all religion is neurosis, all religious people are deluded in their experience of God and all mystic experience is illusory and hallucinatory. These answers based on their limited understanding as they are cannot in any way help us in answering the real question, Is there a God answering the prayers of His devotees and have religious ideas and experiences any objective reality ? Now we must reiterate once more that psychology cannot answer questions such as these, and the attempt to dogmatize on them on the basis of psychological data alone is quite abortive. This is a problem of great philosophical importance. We are obliged to philosophers who have tried to convince us that the religious intuitions of mankind, mystic experiences of great mystics are genuine experiences and no illusory, nor hallucinatory. If we regard them as illusory we fail to explain why there is such cosmic illusion. It is a mystery that mystics both from East and West, ancient and modern have given more or less similar account of their experiences and have spoken in the same tone. From this we have reason to conclude that these experiences are caused by the objective transcendental principle, God. If we are to judge the reality and worth of mystic experience by its effects it establishes itself as it leads to moral development of the individual and the society. A mystic's final judge is his own self. Having come across great mystics all the world over, having benefited from their teachings, having been affected by their preachings and personalities how can we deny their experiences as pseudo ones ? As Kant rightly observes the element of universality contained in it would confer upon mystical experience the objectivity, necessity and validity. Speaking of the mystic expeience and its validity Bertrand Russell, who is himself a rationalist in his famous book Mysticism and Logic says, "I have no wish to deny it, nor even to declare that the insight which reveals it is not a genuine insight. What I wish to maintain is that insight, untested and unsupported is an insufficient guarantee of truth."

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The Psychological aspectof Religious Experience.

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The fundamental belief of a religious man is that he is in touch with a higher power and that saving experiences come from that power. The saints and the seers are the salt of the earth and we cannot underestimate their religious experiences. Let us not start with the assumption that their experiences are pathological or abnormal. The scientific spirit would be to undertake an objective and impartial study of these experiences and see whether they can be explained in terms of ordinary psychology.

We may not enter into a detailed discussion of the two extreme views, namely :(1) The one that makes an appeal to the supernatural as detached from the natural. It is pointed out that resorting to the supernatural whenever the natural cannot explain, is no explanation. It is a *deus exmachina* brought in whenever unfamiliar phenomena demand an explanation : (2) the other that offers a mere subliminal interpretation which makes an appeal to pathological aberrations. Freud, Prince and Sidis hold that the origin of the religious experience may be in the unconscious, due to social education and suggestion. The question arises whether the religious experiences are entirely due to the working of the subconscious self. Do abnormal experiences constitute the whole of religion ? Muirhead sets aside this explanation in terms of the subconscious when he says: " with the subliminal we have no quarrel. We accept it; but we refuse to accept it as a substitute for the sublime". The compromise view is adopted by Willam James who holds that a religious man is conscious that a higher part of him is conterminous and continuous with a *more* of the same quality. What is supernatural is only a part of the natural. The supernatural may be as yet unknown and it would be wrong to hold it as unknowable. Even supposing that the super-natural is not knowable in the strict sense of the term, it is not inexperiencable. Experience is wider than discursive knowledge. What is important is experience and not mere theoretical speculation. The mystics are empiricists *par excellence* as J. Royce points out. Because *Anubhava* or intuitive experience is the only thing which is believed or trusted.

For a thorough knowledge of anything we must know first its nature and then seek its explanation. The first part is the descriptive or psychological aspect. Flint observes: ' The testimony of consciousness is sufficient to establish the existence of religion as subjective or mental state but cannot certify whether, as such it is simple or complex, primary or derivative, coextensive with human consciousness, or wider or narrower, or whether there be anything objectively corresponding to it.'[1]

The psychological aspect of religious experience is not concerned with the validity of that experience that part being given over to epistemology. Here the main objective is a positive description and scientific explanation of mental phenomena and outward behaviour of those who are blessed with religious experience.

What is the faculty of knowing God? Intuition, it is generally agreed, is that faculty. But, all theologians do not accept that God is known through intuition. They hold that nature and scripture are media of the knowledge of God and hence there is no necessity of intuition. Had intuition been the means of knowledge of God, there would not be any variations in the idea of God. But the history of religion establishes such variations and so this is a proof against intuition. But intuition cannot be dispensed with so easily.

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[1] Theism : p. 344.

Even creative thinking does involve an element of intuition.

Intuition is something which transcends intellect, feeling and will. James puts it, intellect and senses both swoon away in highest states of ecstacy.[1] To transend Reason does not mean to annul it, as Mc. Taggart says. Intuition has come to fulfil, not destroy reason; intuition leads to direct apprehension of God. If we look into the working of instinct, intellect and intuition, we are told that experience of instinct is direct but unconscious, that of intellect is conscious but indirect, while that of intuition is both direct and conscious. That directness of instinct and accumulation of knowledge by intellect are combined in intuition is stated in another way; intuition is instinct encircled by intellect, instinct turning back upon itself with the vast knowledge of matter with which alone intellect is at home.

In creative thinking, as everyone knows, there are four stages-preparation, incubation, illumination and verification. Similarly the process of religious experience might be said to involve the same four stages. There is preparation. Unless intensive *sādhana* carried on continuously for a long time with devotional fervour one would not be able to reach the goal. Corresponding to incubation which is understood in psychology as a period of no apparant progress intervening between preparation and illumination, we have, in the spiritual endeavour, a stage called the dark night of the soul. This is an agonising stage indeed, but is a necessary ingredient in the pilgrim's progress. In the case of inventors and scientists the saving idea may come in a flash; how this illumination comes we do not know. In the case of religious experience also, there is a sudden flash of God-vision. This inspiration can be explained in terms of grace only. It is common knowledge that unless there is grace our efforts will not be crowned with success. If we speak of verification in scientific theories, there is corroboration in religious phenomena. There is external verification as the religious experiences of one saint are corroborated by experiences of another saint. There is also internal corroboration in so far as experience of one sense is verified by that of another. This is called catalepsia. As Dr. Ranade puts it: "the experiense of eye is supported by the experience of the ear, tongue, skin, movement and so forth. It is this kind of binding together and integration of supersensuous experiences that constitutes absolute beatification."[1] This raises a point. Speaking from the point of ordinary psychology, sense organs are independent of each other. The experience or *Anubhava* of saints, of inter-communicability of senses, is not apperceived by ordinary psychology. It is something new and unacceptable to it. As James points out, 'most of us grow more and more enslaved to the stock conceptions with which we have once become familiar, and less and less capable of assimilating impressions in any but the old ways. Old-fogyism in short is the inevitable terminus to which life sweeps us on. Objects which violate our established habits of 'apperception' are simply not taken account of at all.'[1] It is very difficult to apprehend new ideas and just fit them in our already existing system of knowledge, that is to say to apperceive new things. A genius is able to perceive in an unhabitual way. He is receptive to new ideas; he is prepared to look at things in a new light; he is ready to admit their novelty and does not twist them and force them into his old stock. Similarly, a seeker after truth will be receptive to ideas given vent to by mystics; he is prepared to leave the deep rooted conviction that senses are opaque, that there is no inter-communicativeness.

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[1] Varieties of Religious Experience- P. 316.

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[1] Pathwy to God in Kannad Literature.

Looking to the psychological effects of God realisation we are told that the experience is full of joy and that as *Ānanda* or joy enters by one door *Ālasya* or sloth leaves by the other. This beatific experience renders the soul more energetic.

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[1] Varieties of Religious Experience- p. 316.

The Indian psychology of mysticism talks of *Aṣṭa–Sãttvika Bhāvãs* or eight pure emotions. These pure emotions, it must be remembered, play on the background of *Bhakti Rasa* or the sentiment of devotion in the case of religious experience. A sublime account of these *Aṣṭa Sãttvika Bhãvãs* is given in *Jnäneshwari* XI 245–252.

The eight different mystical emotions about which *Jnäneshwara* speaks are: horripilation. perspiration, lachrymation, tremour, paresis, epoche, peace and joy.

On the other hand the *Alankãra śãstra* which also enumerates *Astaṣattvike Bhãvas* hasa different scheme: स्वेदः स्तंम्भोऽथ रोमांचः स्वरभंगोऽथ वेपथु :। वैवर्ण्यम् अश्रुप्रलय इत्यष्टौ सात्त्विका स्मृता :। *Jnāneśwar* speaks of peace and joy instead of *vaivarṇya* and *Pralaya* in the classical list, the others being common. The two emotions *Pralaya and Stambha* in the classical scheme seem to connote the same physiological reactions. Again the emotions of Pralaya or swoon (*Mūrcchā*) may have a side effect of producing Vaivarṇya or paleness and may not be given a status of a separate emotion.

In Jnāneshwari we find six emotions from the classical list and the addition of peace and joy makes the list more colourful. In fact peace and joy that are added by Jnāneshwara seem to be the only emotions, the rest being mere bodily changes.

Further there arises a competition of the emotions of fear and joy in the mind of one who is blessed with a religious experience. Because of the majesty and awe of the experience there is terror. The Numinous, says Otto, is mysterium tremendum. The joy is due to the singular character and the unique nature of religious experience. Kant speaks of a similar emotion – a species of awe one experiences when one contemplates on moral purity. A beautiful account of this emotion called Achtung is given by Broad. " On such occasions the being, who from his mixed nature belongs both to the world of sense and to the supra sensible world, is getting a peep, and the only direct peep which he can get in this life, into the latter. This glimpse humbles and even frightens him, in so far as his nature is partly animal and sensuous; yet, at the same time, it exalts him, in so far as his nature is fundamentally rational, by reminding him that he is a citizen of the supersensible world "[1]

As a further consequence of mystical experience it is maintained that creation looks divine.

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[1] Five Types of Ethical Theory- P. 139

In moments of illumination a mystic sees the world *Sub-Species aeternitalis*. St. Francis of Assissi said that every living creature was a theophany.

We must not fail to bear in mind that there is invariably an element of interpretation whenever a saint describes his experience. In the first place what we get is a picture of religious experience not as it was experienced but as it is remembered and described. The interpretation may differ slightly from saint to saint in view of the temperamental differences. One may be an activist, another may be an emotional type, yet another, an intellectualist. Inspite of these differences in description the quality of the inner experience is the same.

Finally we should not boast of being competent ourselves to explain the religious experience. A little bit of humility, suspense of judjment seem to be the only courses open to us. There should not be any venture of hasty generalisation. Justifiable agnosticism is the better part of a full explanation. All the facts of religious experience do not lie within the domain of psychology and the explanation attempted by psychology will always remain partial.

Pratt lays stress on the inadequacy of psychological explanation by giving a very apt illustration of a group of blind men with whom there are one or two men who can see the sun. The psychologist says that the light sensation is an invariable accompaniment of open eyelids and will prove it by a method of difference. The naive man is unsatisfied with the explanation but the psychologist would challenge him to see the light with closed eyelids. Both the seer and psychologist are right; yet the fact remains that the seer sees the sun.

May it then perhaps be that the mystics are the real seers and that whenever they open the eyes of their souls, the Eternal light pours in and though we blind ones learnedly describe, generalise and explain their experience by regular psychological laws, still the light is really there and the mystics apprehend it directly. In a poem by Woodbine Willie we get a vivid description of what a psychologist does. He says:

He takes the saint to pieces,
And labels all the parts,
He tabulates the secrets,
Of loyal loving hearts.

The poem goes on describing how the psychologist professes to analyse the martyr's motives to explain the beatific vision as infant fantacies, to probe into their unconscious and find an Oedipus complex there, to understand their sex perversions and horror of hell; but alas ! the psychologist has only one small weakness, he cannot make a saint!

Valuational Determination of the Validity of Religious Experience.

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I. Philosophical and Religious Knowledge.

The ultimate aim of both Philosophy and Religion is to know Reality, with only this difference that while the philosophical knowledge is intellectual, rational or theoretical, the religious knowledge is affective, devotional and, in a sense, practical. While the intellectual understanding of reality tends to be analytic, abstract and hence peripheral, the affective experiece of reality tends to be synthetical, concrete and intimate in a superb way. As a matter of fact these two ways of knowing have been epistemologically recognised. One is a 'knowledge about', and hence tends to be a round about way of knowing; and the other is a 'knowledge by acquaintance', hence it is an understanding from within, which goes to the heart of object of knowledge. These two ways of knowing, though they could be so distinguished, are very complementary of each other. The dificiencies of each are made good by the other. In fact they fulfill each other. The intellectual way of knowing has a clarity of its own and is an easy instrument of communication. The religious way of knowing is esoteric, intimative enjoyment, and hence very truly personal and private. Though this religious way of knowledge is not sharable, as the theoretical knowledge could be, it has a universality of its own, being capable of realization by any person who is sufficiently qualified for that sort of knowledge.

II. Knowledge determines the object of knowledge.

One very significant question is how to ensure that knowledge of reality has taken place. This is the question of the validity of knowledge, whether it is of one kind, that is, philosophical knowledge or of another kind, that is religious knowledge.

Is there any possibility of comparing reality with knowledge and determining the validity of that knowledge? The answer is clearly in the negative. The knowing agent or the knower is directly conscious of his knowledge, whether intellectual or intuitive, rational or affective, philosophical or religious. It is through this knowledge that he makes an approach to reality. There is no way from the end of reality, existence, or fact as one may decide to name it to the other end of knowledge, experience, idea as it is variously called. Between these two ends of reality and experience, being and knowledge, fact and idea, the passage is only one way, and that is from experience to reality and not vice versa.

Jnanesvara has expressed this relation as following;

तरि ज्ञेय ऐसे म्हणणे । वस्तुते येणेंचि कारणे ।
जें वांचूनि कळणे । उपाये नये ॥ १३-८-६४

The reality is called as an object of knowledge only because there is no other method of approaching it excepting that of knowledge. In other words, it is knowledge and knowledge alone that constitutes the determinant of reality. While the nature of truth requires that the object should determine the idea, such objective determination of idea does not at all take place; or even if it is granted that it does, there is no way of such verification.

III. The Epistemological determination of Ontology.

The same question when put in a broader or a more fundamental way takes on the form of the relation between epistemology and ontology. ygs the antology determinant of espistemonoloI or the espistimology determinant of ontology ? Is the way of being definitive of the way of knowing, or the way of knowing definitive of the way of being ? Which of these has a determinative priority ? Ordinarily we expect the validity of knowledge as flowing from the determinative principle of reality. But the fact as it stands is exactly the other way round. We have to accept, whether we like it or not, the fact of the cognitive determination of the object cognised. It is the acceptance or endorsement of the priority of knowledge over the object known. It is the recognition of the principle of the epistemological determination of ontology.

IV The Impossibility of Correspondence Theory.

Actually the above is the exposition of the inherent defect of the correspondence theory of truth. We can never have a situation in which we can enter into a comparison of a fact not known with the same fact known and make an appraisal of their correspondence. Every knower knows only the one side of this reletion, and that is always the side of knowledge. There is thus inherent impossibility of arriving at validation of knowledge by establishing its correspondence with the object {so known. The known object, that is idea or experience, is the object known. There are no two events or facts to be compared but only one of knowledge or experience. Surely the suggestion is not that knowledge merely knows itself, but that the object could be known only through knowledge.

V. Coherence and utility as values of kwowledge.

Internal coherence of knowledge or experience is suggested to be another criterion of truth. However, the internal coherence of knowledge does not engender the conviction of a contact with reality. There could be a whole world of fictions which may be internally quite coherent and yet far removed from reality.

The pragmatic theory of truth does correct to a large extent this lacuna of the coherence theory, in so far as knowledge is tested by putting it to a practical verification. Here somehow we do feel that we are not merely moving in the circle of our ideas. But this theory is vitiated by the possibility of the utility of even a false idea. Utility certainly is important, but that alone cannot constitute the validation of knowledge. Again, practicality is an aspect of experience. By putting knowledge to a practical test, we are not going beyond knowledge; we are only supplementing one kind of knowledge by another kind of knowledge. We are only trying to bring these two kinds of knowledge into an internal coherence.

We are therefore reduced to the original position of the epistemological determination of ontology. It is the position of the absolute priority of knowledge over its object. The problem of its validation remains where it originally was.

I look upon the correspondence theory of truth as a postulate of knowledge. By this postulate what is meant is that we must of necessity assume that all knowledge does inherently point to an object independent of it and which also does correspond to it. This correspondence is not something which could be verified, but which nevertheless gives meaning to knowledge.

The other two theories of truth, viz., the coherence and successful activity constitute two values of knowledge. The first is the logical value. The second is the utilitarian or practical value These two values, among others, determine the validity of knowledge.

VI. Valuational Determination of validity.

This valuational determination of the validity of knowledge is a principle that needs further elaboration. The suggestion is this that in the absence of the direct establishment of the correspondence between knowledge and its object, the validity of knowledge depends upon the values that knowledge promotes as well as the values which promote knowledge.

In the tripartite knowledge situation of the sudject or knower, his knowledge and the object of knowledge, the objective determination of the validity has been already ruled out, though that has been accepted as a postulate that gives meaning to knowledge. Now what remains is the relation between the knower and his knowledge. The values which promote knowledge in this case are the values which the knower represents in him. The knower requires a certain valuational qualification to be the right kind of knower. He represents certain physical, mental, intellectual, moral and spiritual values, which collectively qualify him to be more or less good knower

VII. Values promote knowledge

To illustrate briefly this valuational determination of the validity of knowledge, it should be immediately recognised that the validity of perceptual knowledge would depend upon the soundness of the sense organs of the perceiver. It would again require some stability of mind. If the perceiver's mind is perturbed his perception may be disturbed. The knower should have intellectual alertness and preparedness equal to the field of his knowledge. A trained mathematician can grasp the mathematical problems. A trained biologist or sociologist will be qualified to make relevant observation in his field. A certain amount of inpartiality is necessary in observation. Even if an interest is required in the field of knowledge, it is a mental qualification of the knower. But besides this, ¦the moral qualification of disinterested observation in the. interest of truth is essential.It is this initially moral qualification, when firmly rooted in the personality of the knower, that is transformed or elevated to a spiritual quality. In brief, these qualities are the values in terms of which the knower's personnality could be evaluated. The validity of any knowledge would, therefore, come to be determined by the values represented in the knower's personality. This is how the valuational qualification of the knower promotes his knowledge.

VIII Knowledge promotes values.

Knowledge, again, promotes values. The values which knowledge would promote are very many. These are the human values in general. Knowledge may promote individual and social, values, of health, comfort, understanding, justice peace, progress and so on. Knowledge which promotes values is valid. That knowledge which does the opposite would be evaluated as an error of a sort. Such valuational definition of validity or truth has been given in Mahabharat: " यत् सर्वं भूतहिनं अत्यंतं तत्सत्यं निगद्यते । "

That is called truth which leads to the greatest good of all creatures. The concept of truth, therefore, is not restricted to the factual content of knowledge. It comprehends the promotion of the ideals of human life.

IX Religion is a Quest for Values.

How does this principle of the valuational determination of validity affect religion and mysticism ?

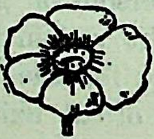
In its ultimate aims and objects religon is a quest for values. Religion has both an individual and a social meaning. The concept of *Dharma* comprehends both these meanings. Dharma consists in the promotion and realisation of the maximum values of human existence, both in the individual life as well as in the social life. To live a life of *Dharma* is to organize one's life in such a way as to realize harmoniously and integrally all the values of human existence. In proportion as any individual does follow such a life of dharma he increases his *Adhikāra* or capability for the knowledge of truth. A man's knowledge contains within it as much truth as he is qualified to know, in accordance with his truly religious or *Dhārmika* life.

X Mysticism is realization of the maximum values.

The highest core of the religious life is realized in mystical experience. The mystics are great personalities, and though broadly speaking, they reveal a certain uniformity in their experiences, yet the degree of the truth that they reach in those experiences is determined by the dergee to which they have integrated the values of life.

In an integrated life of the mystic, the cognitive, the affective and the conative values are realized. The mystics show extraordinary capacities of intellectual insight, broadness of emotive life and superb energy for extensive activity. They are persons of great vision having a far-sight, fore-sight and insight. They have a deep feeling not only for the family of mankind, but for the unity of all existence. Their moral quality is exceptionally high. Their religious and spiritual urge is unparalleled. It is because of this high worth of their personalities that they become repositories of the highest truth. They are the torch-bearers of mankind taking it to the higher plane of existence. They stand head and soulders above the common men in the realization of values. Thus through their lives they set examples for others to follow.

The above is a brief statement of what I have chosen to call as 'axionoetic idealism.' The general idealistic position consists in the determination of reality in terms of experience. Axionoetic idealism consists in the determination of the validity of experience in terms of the values inplied in the experience. The transition is from ideals to ideas, and then ideas to facts. Values determine validity and validity determines reality. Thus the valuational orientation of knowledge and being is the chief standpoint of axionoetics.



Concluding Remarks by the Chairman – Shri. V. G. Jamkhandi.

At the outset, the Chairman expressed his sense of embarassment because a layman like him had to occupy the Chair in the absence of Sri. Kakaseheb Tulpule, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees. In such an assembly of great scholars and stalwart Sadhakas and devotees, who were since long treading the "pathway to God", he was a poor and inadequate proxy.

Then he made the following observations in the course of his concluding remarks.

Various important aspects and view-points regarding the very interesting subject of the seminar "The validity and value of Religious Experience" were referred to and developed by the learned speakers, and several interesting questions were raised during the discussions. Eminent authorities, Eastern and Western, ancient and modern, were cited. However, it would not be possible to touch upon every detail and only the more important topics would be dealt with here.

The subject of Religious Experience involves the consideration of crucial questions, having vital bearing on our day to day life. Our life has got to be ordered and regulated by reference to some fixed goal or ideal, and therefore, the determination of the goal of human life is a primary condition for all of us, so that the achievement of the goal would constitute the sole mission of our life. Then, all our actions, conduct, character etc. would have to be judged and evaluated by reference to the final goal. Religion should be essentially practical and the mandates of Religion would be relevant and valuable only to the extent that they help us in the pathway to the final realisation of the goal.

Naturally, in a matter like this, there are bound to be controversies between different schools of philosophy and philosophers. All the same, it is of the utmost improtance that we should be able to derive some guidance from the interesting discussion, and it is, indeed, possible to find a practical way for living a spiritual life.

It is necessary, at the outset, to understand the exact connotation of the expression " Religious Experience ". It has nothing to do with the dogmas or the ceremonial rites and rituals of any particular religion. Religion means the most intimate and immediate communion between man and his Maker and " Religious Experience " means the innermost core of religion, the highest experience that man is capable of reaching. Religion is thus the process of spiritual realisation As Swami VIVEKANANDA has said Religion is Realisation. It may be stated here that mysticism is the innermost essence and substance of spiritual life and there is nothing mysterious about mysticism. It is desirable to have an idea of the nature and content of the highest spiritual experience-which is the goal of human life-as recorded in our ancient scriptures.

The Bhagavadgita has the following verses viz

यत्रोपरमते चित्तम् निरुद्धं योगसेवया ।
यत्र चैवात्मनात्मानं पश्यन्नात्मनि तुष्यति ॥
सुखमात्यन्तिकं यत्तद् बुद्धिग्राह्यमतींद्रियम् ।
वेत्ति यत्र न चैवायं स्थितश्चलति तत्त्वतः ॥ VI.20–21

These verses give a brief description of the highest state of human consciousness, in which, the Atman, seeing Itself, within Itself, anjoys the highest bliss or beatitude. There are analogous versions in the Gita describing the Sthitaprajna, Yogi, and Devotee, etc. Then in the Ishavasya, verses Nos. 6 and 7 are as below :

यस्तु सर्वाणि भूतानि आत्मन्येवानुपश्यति ।
सर्वभूतेषु चात्मानं ततो न विजुगुप्सते ॥ ६ ॥
यस्मिन् सर्वाणि भूतानि आत्मैवाभूद्विजानतः ।
तत्र को मोहः कः शोक एकत्वमनुपश्यतः ॥ ७ ॥

They indicate the state of consciousness of one who has realised the SELF and declare that the Self-Realisd Sage becomes free from all infatuation and suffering. Lastly, the oft quoted classical Mantra from the Mundakopanishad may be cited here.

भिद्यते हृदयग्रंथिः
छिद्यन्ते सर्वसंशयाः
क्षियन्ते चास्य कर्माणि
तस्मिन्दृष्टे परावरे

For one having the vision of God, the knots of the heart are cut asunder, all doubts vanish and the mandates of duty no longer bother him. The same spiritual experiences, with slight variations, are recorded in all the mystical literatures of the world. It is the language of trancendance describing the experiences of one who has risen above the turmoils of the world, and enjoy perennial bliss. No wonder, the greatest men of all ages and countries have accepted this sublime spiritual experience as the goal of human life.

Naturally, there are numerous hurdles in the path of one who aspires to reach this highest peak of spiritual experience. In the course of discussions, some questions and doubts were raised, and inter alia, it was said that a ' Guru ' was not absolutely necessary for spiritual progress, especially when it is so very difficult to find a " Genuine

Guru " among a host of pseudo gurus, that the ideal of mysticism was negative and un-ethical and appeared to be opposed to reason, if not altogether irrational, that it was in no way beneficial to society, that Indian Philosophy, especially, the so called MAYA-WADA of SRI. SHANKARACHARYA was responsible for the ills of our country, and that it meant complete absorption and no social good could be expected from it. These are objections which seek to challenge the very foundation of mysticism and the spiritual experiences which constitute the very core of Mysticism and it is desirable to deal with them.

Regarding the question, whether a " Guru " is at all necessary for our spiritual development, no doubt, there may be rare instances in the ancient past, and even now, of some individuals having attained to great spiritual heights without the guidance of a Guru. It is also true that, some times, we come across instances of pseudo Gurus, who abuse their power and authority over their desciples and commit all sorts of fraud. But it is well known that all good things are capable of being abused and misused. But that would be no ground for discarding all good things. Again it is not necessary to go to the length of denying the very possibility of spiritual attainment without the help of a Guru; such supermen may have existed in the past, and may appear again from time to time and they would be always welcomed by suffering humanity. But the real practical difficulty is not at all solved by this mere recognition of such a possibility. For all ordinary mortals like us, even in small matters of life, e. g. the study of any subject or craft, the need for a teacher is acutely felt. Attainment of the highest goal of life is, undoubtedly the most valuable and extra-ordinary achievement for any one and it would be foolhardy to suggest that one could do without a teacher, or a Guru. Arjuna, for example, was an extraordinary man, from any standard, and Sri. Aurobindo calls him the Representative man of the age. Even Arjun says, in the Gita,

यच्छ्रेयः स्यान्निश्चितं ब्रूहि तन्मे
शिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम्–II 7

and after having listened to the Divine discourse says,

नष्टो मोहः स्मृतिर्लब्धा त्वप्रसादान्मयाच्युत ।
स्थितो ऽस्मि गतसंदेहः करिष्ये वचनं तव ॥ XVIII–73

and gratefully a knowledges freely and without any reservation, that it was by the Grace of his Guru that he was saved. Bhagwan Sri Krishna himself says–

तध्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया ।
उपदेक्ष्यंति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः ॥ Gita IV–34

The necessary implication is that one has got to approach a SAD-GURU for receiving the key to unlock the mystery of life, and achieve the highest goal of human existance. If any one feels that he can, by his own unaided efforts, scale the spiritual heights he is indeed free to do so. But one should bear in mind that such a feeling–very often founded and un–justified–is itself a stumbling block in the spiritual path. Here, one has to work within his own consciousness which by itself, constitutes the field, the worker, and all that is needed for the experiment, (intropection) and spiritual research. For all practical purposes, therefore a Guru is absolutely necessary for progress on the spiritual path.

It is then said that the mystical ideal is negative in quality in asmuchas it does not advocate richness and fulness of life and it is un–ethical, since the element of social good is not stressed and that a mystic–whatever his individual spiritual experiences or attainments may be–is of no practical use to society. These objections seem to arise out of a misapprehension of genuine mysticism and mystical experiences. If, as has been stated above, mysticism leads one to a region of consciousness, where there is neither MOHA nor SHOKA [infatumation & grief] it would be a contra-diction terms to dub it as negative. It is also clear that the example of one who has perfected his spiritual Sadhana by a rigid course of moral preparation, cannot, but do the highest good to society in general. If men, who are themselves yet stumbling and struggling and are subject to weakness, and temptations – can claim to do good to society, it would obviously follow that the greatest good and benefit should accrue to society by the example of saints and sages. Human misery is an extremely strange phenomenon. Large number of men and woman are found to be miserable inspite of their possession of all comforts and amenities of life. Therefore it is plain that mere absence of riches, or outward fulness, and comforts is not the real cause of human misery, though it is true that all efforts should be made to see that the minimum amenities and comforts are made available to every one. History records several instances of great kings and warriors having left their vast material possessions and having taken to a spiritual life in quest of a really rich and full life. The story of YAJNAVALKYA, and the dialogue between him and his spouse MAITREYI, provides an illustration in this behalf. The perennial inner spring of bliss and joy cannot be supplied by any amount of material comforts. It is a matter of genuine shift in one's consciousness, an ascent to a higher stratum of consciousness, where one is beyond and above the torments and turmoils of the world and is untouched and unaffected by its dualities and vicissitudes. Just as one ceases to be an infant, and outgrows infancy when one grows and becomes a man, so also the mystic has outgrown the ills of the world by lifting himself into a higher region of consciousness. It is a case of transcendence, an expansion and a widening of one's consciousness. A mystic who has realised God, is in the world, but he is not of the world. He seems to be living in the body, but, in fact, he is not confined to it. Just as parents do sympathise with the petty sqabbles and sorrows of their children, and do offer consolation to them, though they themselves do not feel the grief, so also the mystics sympathise with the sorrows of ordinary men and women and try their best to console them–though they have themselves ceased to be subject to the joys and sorrows of the world for the simple reason that they had at an earlier stage of their life, experience of the same misery and sorrow. From this point of view, it may be stated that the mystics are the only real empiricists, since they have experience of both the wordly and the spiritual life, and, it looks rather odd that, without having any acquaintence with the mystic path and the mystical experiences, we should venture to offer comments on mysticism. The mystics have reached a state of consciousness, in which they stand unshaken and unperturbed even in the face of the greatest crisis and calamity and in which they enjoy the highest Bliss and beatitude. The following verses of the Geeta may be quoted here.

> एषा बाह्मी स्थितिः पार्थ नैनां प्राप्य विमुह्यति ।
> स्थित्वास्यामन्त कालेऽपि ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृच्छति ॥ II. 72
> यंलब्ध्वा चापरं लाभं मन्यते नाधिकं ततः ।
> यस्मिन्स्थितो न दुःखेन गुरुणापि विचाल्यते ॥ VI. 22
> युञ्जन्नेवं सदात्मानं योगी विगतकल्मषः ।
> सुखेन ब्रह्मसंस्पर्शमत्यन्तं सुखमश्नुते ॥ VI. 28

It is obvious that such a state of consciousness could not be said to be negative in quality.

Similarly the criticism that the mystic's attitude is unethical springs from a misapprehension of both mysticism and the ethical attitude. Moral codes are neither universal nor uniform and are varying from age to age in the same community or country; whereas mysticism connotes something universal and ever abiding without any distinction between man and man. A moral code is only a socil device intended to preserve sociaal solidarity, peace and harmony, the principle being that individual desires, impulses and vagaries should be restrained and subordinated to serve social good, depending on the particular social structure of the community or country and liable to change according to the varying needs of the community. Hence what is moral in one country may not be so in another. For the mystic, moral conduct and preparation is the very foundation on which his spiritual superstructure has to be raised and it is utterly impossible that a mystic could be unethical in his attitude. In fact, mystics reach a stage of super moralism, a stage where there is no conflict in them of right and wrong, and where they do only the right things by their very nature and where they have become incapable of doing anything wrong. This again is an instance o transcendence in the moral realm, where all conflict has ceased and no wrong could be done at all. As one Kannada Saint has said, the God-realised mystic is struck by partial paralysis, the wrong side has become incapacitated and he has become incapable of doing anything wrong. The impulse to do anything bad or evil is completely eliminated. They belong to the category of the great devotee who has been described in XII th Adhyaya of the Geeta.

अद्वेष्टा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एवच । Gita XII
निर्ममो निरहंकारः समदुःखसुखः क्षमी ॥ 13
संतुष्टः सततं योगी यतात्मा दृढनिश्चयः ।
मय्यर्पित मनोबुद्धिर्यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥ 14
यस्मान्नो द्विजते लोको लोकान्नोद्विजते च यः ।
हर्षामर्षभयोद्वेगैर्मुक्तो यः स च मे प्रियः ॥ 15

The good that they do to society may not be spectacular and may not have the element of glamour or sensation, but by their exemplary ilfe of penance and purity and universal compassion, they serve as beacon lights illuminating the. "Pathway to God" for all humanity to follow They are far ahead of normal humanity as we find it today and are veritable spearheads pointing the direction of human spiritual development.

Another point raised was whether the highest mystical experience is one of complete absorption in God or the Absolute Reality, or some other state without such absorption. This is really a great problem but it is not necessary for our present purpose to tackle and resolve it. There is no point in waiting and not starting on our Sadhana, until the question is satisfactorily answered. Human life is proverbially short and uncertain, and it would be highly [unwise on our part to waste even a single moment. In all branches of human knowledge, constant advance is being made, and old theories are exploded and discarded, still we all do act on the assumption that the current theories are correct. It is in such a predicament that the need for a Guru is most urgently felt. If one has unflinching faith in his Guru, and if he is blessed by him, he can be sure that he is on the right lines. In the Geeta, Bhagawan Shri Krishna has pointed out, how men without faith move endlessly round the wheel of birth and death.

अश्रद्दधानाः पुरुषा धर्मस्यास्य परंतप ।
अप्राप्य मां निवर्तन्ते मृत्युसंसारवर्त्मनि ॥ Gita IX-3.

It is well known that Swami Vivekananda as the young and impetuous Narendra implicitly believed in his Guru, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. All faith is not opposed to reason, and faith is not synonymons with superstition. Rational faith is absolutely necessary in life and every one acts on faith in actual life, in innumerable matters. There is the authentic story of a great saint, who frankly told his would-be disciple that he could give a fair trial to his guidance and if he was not satisfied, he was free to leave him and seek some other master. Nothing could be more fair and rational than this attitude of the great saint. Thus one has got to be practical, and commence one's spiritual Sadhana forthwith, without waiting until all the metaphyiscal problems are solved to his satisfaction. This is illustrated in one of the parables in the writings of Swami Rama Tirtha. The disciple had to cover a long distance on a dark night and the small lantern could show just a step or two, and not the entire distance. While the disciple was hesitating, the Guru told him that as he walked along the further way would be illumined.

so far as the doctrine of absorption is concerned the verse in the Geeta–

भक्त्या मामभिजानाति यावान्यश्चास्मि तत्त्वतः ।
ततो मां तत्त्वतो ज्ञात्वा विशते ऽदनन्तरम् ॥ Gita XVIII–55

and other similar instances may perhaps suggest absorption. So also NIRVIKALPA SAMADHI may, perhaps, mean absorption. But in the matter of mystical experience, as in the case of any other experience, the ultimate criterion is the experience itself as experienced by the individual mystics. However, the question need not be persued here.

It is also said that our philosophy of mysticism and individual salvation, and MAYA WADA have led our country to ruin and destitution. One would not mind if such criticism is levelled by foreign scholars or some interested persons. In any event, the comment betrays an incorrect appreciation of our philosophy and its back ground, and especially of our mysticism. Mysticism is essentially the spiritual development of man leading him to the attainment of the highest ideal of human life. It is impossible that any one who is a serious student of mysticism, and further, a serious aspirant and a Sadhaka, could be either an idler or a dishonest cheat. It is likely that the Maya Wada of the great SHANKARACHARYA is not properly understood. It is obvious that, in any event, any one who wants to seriously study his works and understand his philosophy, could not be or become an idler. Sri. Shankaracharya's short life of incessant activity, is the greatest commentary on his philosophy and none would become an idler by a study of his works. The circumstance that India has not been able to maintain her power and prestige, is due to several historical causes, some of them beyond human control or even human contemplation, but mysticism is certainly not one of them. History is replete with instances of the rise, decline and fall of great nations which had nothing to do with mysticism or Maya Wada. Their fate, just as the fate of individuals, is moulded and governed by altogether different laws. Rational mysticism may not directly offer any material rewards but this is not a point against it. The call of mysticism is for those who have not been able to secure real happiness, even thoug they had the amenities and comforts of life in an ample measure. But this does not mean that others need not, or ought not to, take to mysticism. It may be also stated on the authority of great saints that mysticism is the universal panacea and solvent for all the ills of the world. The mystical sadhana which would spiritually raise the sadhaka beyond the worldly plane of torment and turmoil is certainly powerful enough to grant worldly boons, but they should not be treated as the sole incentives of a spiritual life. Mysticism ignites the innermost fire of spiritual life, and starts the process of transcendence and imperceptibly there is a shift in the consciousness of the mystic. There is a gradual change in his entire perspective and outlook on life. It is a process of integration and expansion, simultaneously, of the consciousness and unless for individual lapses, the mystic ought to be and become a better man in every respect. He developes a higher and keener sense of duty, and efficiency, a deeper sense of sympathy and consideration for others, and most important of all, an inner sense of equanimity.

It is also said that mysticism cannot be rational and it is something opposed to reason.

This criticism again, stems from an incorrect appreciation of true mysticism. Mysticism is quite rational and here we are concerned only with rational mysticism, and one need not bother with other brands of mysticism, if any. It may be that mysticism transcends reason but that is entirely different from being irrational. Transcendence implies that reason is itself uplifted from its normal plane to a higher plane where it can function free from error and confusion. From the higher point of view of mysticism the limitations of the normal functioning of reason become apparent. This higher faculty-it may be submitted reason-is called Intuition and it is intuition which would enable one to achieve spiritual progress. In fact the greatest mystics have been great rationalists as well and it would be wrong to imagine any contradiction or opposition between the two. Reason is a faculty designed by nature to minister to the needs of the human organism and cannot be, in its normal condition, an adequate instrument for the realization of the highest spiritual goal of human life. Normal reason works on the data supplied by the human organism, perceptions etc., whereas mysticism implies a direct and immediate experience of the Divine.

There is thus no opposition, there cannot be any-between reason and mysticism. There cannot be any splitting up of the integral human personality. In fact, Intuition which assists the mystic in his spiritual development, can be regarded, in a sense, as the fulfilment and consumation of reason. It is the faculty of intuition which leads the mystic to the final ecstatic beatitude of the highest spiritual experience.

It may be stated, in conclusion, that no thinking man or woman can afford to waste one's life without seeking to reach the highest goal of life and rational mysticism is the path which would enable one to reach and realise it. There is nothing irrational about it, nothing unethical or negative-, nothing anti social about it. If initiated by a Sad-Guru, one would find, under his guidance that one has secured some thing new in life, some thing that has given him a new outlook on life, and most valuable of all, some thing that has given him inner peace and contentment. It is certainly possible for him to reach the highest goal by his persevering sadhana and devotion, aided by the grace of his Sad-Guru.

The Chairman then conveyed his grateful thanks to the elite audience.

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